Tulare High School Junior Taking His Boxing Talents to Russia
Sports, page 22

New & improved: *Real Estate, page 5*

VALLEY VOICE

Volume XXXV No. 16 • 20 August, 2015 www.ourvalleyvoice.com

Sale of Hidden Valley Property Stalled by Planning Commission

Dave Adalian

The fate of the undeveloped portion of Hidden Valley Park remains in limbo following a 4-3 finding by the Hanford Planning Commission that the land is not surplus.

With the city short on funds needed to construct a new fire station, the city council has been again mulling selling 18.1 acres of open land adjoining the park site at 11th Ave. and Courtner St. But, so far there has been stiff opposition.

At its August 11 meeting, the commission was asked to reaffirm a decision it made in 2013, when it determined the land could legally be sold under the terms of the city's General Plan. After some confusion over what property had been included in the survey of Hanford's parkland, as well as how the calculations were made, the present commission concluded Hanford may not have adequate park land to meet future population growth and voted against reaffirming the previous decision.

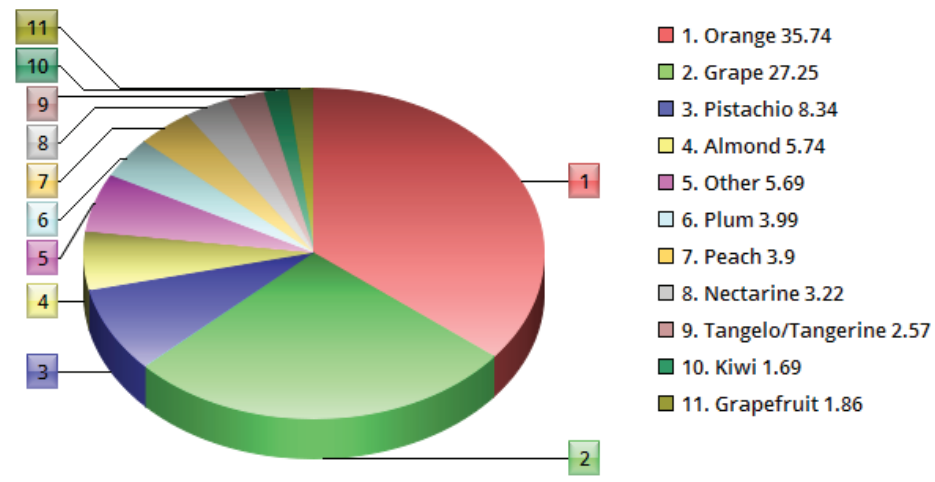
Membership of the planning commission has changed substantially in the two years since its previous finding.

Conserving Open Spaces

In discussion prior to the vote, the commission also debated whether deeming the parkland as surplus would be contrary to state law requiring cities to maintain a high level of recreational land for public use. Making the point were commissioners Dennis Ham and Mark Fernandez.

"This is not going to conserve open space," Ham said of the possible sale.

HIDDEN VALLEY continued on **10 »**



2014 Fruit and Nut Exports

Tulare County Tops $8 Billion in Agriculture Production

Catherine Doe

After the Tulare County Agriculture Commissioner got done presenting the county's record-breaking production numbers, Supervisor Pete Vander Poel summed it up, "in less than 10 years Tulare County has doubled its ag value."

Marilyn Kinoshita, agriculture commissioner, made a point to say during her presentation that, in the face of the states' worst drought in history, this shows the resiliency of Tulare County's farm industry.

The final numbers were presented at the Board of Supervisor's (BOS) meeting on August 11. Tulare County most likely snagged the number one position in agriculture production again with $8,084,672,400 for the year 2014. Fresno and Kern counties, Tulare County's two main competitors, will be reporting their numbers later this month. The production represents a $737,750,400 increase above 2013's crop value. The number one commodity was milk and milk products, valued at $2.5 billion, which is a half billion more than last year. The dairy industry is doing so well because, as Kinoshita explained, "milk prices are the highest we've ever seen."

The next four top producing commodities were calves and cattle, oranges, grapes and almonds. After dairy, almonds and pistachios made the greatest gains with more than $100 million increase, each. Out of the county's 120 commodities, 42 crops brought in more than a million dollars. The $8 billion in production value represents the gross income, but not the expenses of the farmer.

Kinoshita said, Tulare County was

PRODUCTION continued on **7 »**

Tulare County water trucks waiting to transport water from Village Gardens.

Drought Affecting Communities with Strong Wells

Catherine Doe

The consequences of the drought is not just felt by those residents whose wells have gone dry, but also by those small communities that have become a reliable source of water for them. Jack Flores, a resident of an unincorporated community called Village Gardens west of Porterville, approached the Porterville City Council and the Tulare County Board of Supervisors (TC-BOS) on several occasions to explain his community's untenable situation.

The county made an agreement with the City of Porterville that water trucks could pump from Village Gardens' well and deliver the water to the unincorporated community of East Porterville. Village Gardens is part of the county but their well is owned by the City of Porterville. Tulare County is running a "tank program" where they fill up in communities that have water, like Village Gardens, and haul it to communities whose wells have gone dry and fill temporary water tanks. Two hundred-fifty households have received temporary water tanks, with 50 new households added each week. There are an additional 1,200 homes that are out of water and waiting for tanks.

Andrew Lockman, Emergency Services Manager, said that the county needs every source of water available, and will be needing more sources soon. The county is spending an average of $40,000 a week, which adds up to more than $2 million a year just on the trucks to move all that water, and that figure is increasing weekly.

Water Trucks Arrive in Village Gardens

On May 8, water tankers started rolling into Village Gardens. At first the

WELLS continued on **11 »**

Group Seeks to Help the Homeless Help Themselves

Dave Adalian

Daniel Lawrence spent a year living on the streets of Tulare, and what he experienced is helping drive a movement to protect the rights of indigent people in the South Valley.

The Union of Hope, a newly-formed group championing the plight of the homeless, hopes to become both a guardian of their rights and see the county's displaced population working together for its own benefit. Efforts by the homeless themselves, the group believes, could be its greatest resource when it comes to removing obstacles, both practical and political, that keep them unemployed and without housing once they find themselves on their own.

Just Bad Luck

"It wasn't an addiction problem or crime, anything like that. Just bad luck," Lawrence, 31, said of how he ended up on the streets after losing his job at Walmart and going through a divorce while the recession was in full swing. Even before he became unemployed, things had been very tight for his family. "With the help of welfare, I was able to provide my ex and daughter with a car and apartment. Things were rough. Yeah, making it."

Once alone and on the streets, things turned dark. He found himself cited by the police for creating a nuisance on the Santa Fe Trail and couldn't afford to pay the $100 fee Tulare requires before the ticket could be challenged.

"I have to sleep somewhere," Lawrence said he told the officer who issued the citation. Tulare police are tasked with acting as code enforcement officers in situations dealing with the homeless even when no crime has been committed. "I asked where I could go. He basically said, 'Out of sight, out of mind.'"

Lawrence took the advice.

"I started sleeping in bushes," he said. "I'd get evicted by the police or a city crew. They'd cut the bushes back so there was no shelter. These bushes were out of the way. It was obvious it was because of me."

Redress of Grievance

Sgt. Andy Garcia, spokesman for the Tulare Police Department, said that is not the city's policy when dealing with the homeless.

"If it's a nuisance because they're in the bushes, no we're not going to go in and cut those down," he said. "Rails to Trails is considered a park, and there are regulations that prohibit individuals from doing certain things

HOMELESS continued on **4 »**

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

My Firmest Faith

I read on line last month, with some alarm, of the rapidly depleting Ogallala Aquifer--a vast reservoir deposited beneath the Midwest prairie five to 10 million years ago as runoff from the Rocky Mountains. It had slept all that time untapped until 150 or so years ago. And now, apparently, it's on the verge of running dry.

It is estimated that the Ogallala supplies water for 20 percent of the corn, wheat, sorghum and cattle produced nationally. But the recharge rate is tallied at less than 10 percent, which means that for every 10 gallons pumped out, less than one is replaced by rainfall--which in western Kansas, at least, measures 14 to 16 inches annually.

Once emptied, geologists figure it would take 6,000 years for the Ogallala to refill.

It was at this point in the article, with all my hair fully on end, that I thought of California. Our Central Valley Aquifer, according to NASA satellite data, is under the most dire strain of any in the United States. The situation is so bad that, by 2040, California will be on a footing to monitor its groundwater.

But--drought or no drought--we have it lucky.

To begin with, we use our aquifer more like a bank. It's there to be tapped--as it is, heavily, now--in times of drought. Yet in many places above the Ogallala, pumping is the only option. Here in California, mercifully, we have surface water and snowmelt--however meager--regularly.

More than that, though, we have a system in place to deliver this water across the state.

You can scream and complain that it amounts to highway robbery for the crowded Southland to siphon water from northern California--but it's akin to the miraculous that we can do this. You can scream and complain that it's a crime to let fresh water flush the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, but really it is a necessary sacrifice for the health of that ecosystem. It's what keeps the salt water literally at bay.

What this all means, of course--however convoluted and ever-evolving; however, sadly, unsatisfactory--is that our water delivery system affords us options. And we need them. More than half of the fruits and vegetables grown in the United States are grown here. Having a bevy of choices, however poor, is better than having no choice at all. Just ask those farmers who rely solely on the Ogallala.

Now, I wouldn't call the situation here in California a good one--but I do have to admit it is an opportunity. We are learning, in the evolution of our water delivery system, how to contend with the next drought Mother Nature sends us. I don't suppose climate change will do us any favors, but I'm hopeful that we'll adapt nevertheless. It's what we do as a species.

Still, I don't feel very secure. Getting thrown out of your family home will do that to you. And when my wife and I talk about where we'll live out our days, her chief concern is water. I tend to think more along the lines of how many children we'll still have living with us--or future grandchildren--but she is adamant.

"We should move to Washington," she says.

Not a chance. North of the 45th parallel the sunlight is all wrong. It slants--dishonestly, somehow--against the planet in such a fashion that I am dismasted. I can't have it. I might be able to endure the rainfall, but I could never remain in my right mind in that oblique light. Because I was born there, and raised in the East Bay, I'd agree to venture so far northward as San Francisco. I don't even want to visit what they call "the Great Northwest"--except to see a couple of our kids who live up there.

I'm thinking we'll stay somewhere in Central California. I'm thinking the drought will eventually ease and rainfall once again will bless our basins. It is my firmest faith that normal, for California, is, by turns, cycles of drought and wet. And I'm betting that, by the time the next drought hits, we'll be better equipped to contend with it.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

THE VALLEY VOICE IS YOUR NEWSPAPER

Published by The Valley Voice, LLC.

Publisher/Editor: Joseph Oldenbourg
joseph@ourvalleyvoice.com

Staff:
Catherine Doe, writer (catherine@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Tony Maldonado, webmaster (tony@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Nancy Vigran, advertising (nancy@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Stefan Barros, sports (stefan@ourvalleyvoice.com)
Dave Adalian, writer (dave@ourvalleyvoice.com)

Contact us & share your opinion: www.ourvalleyvoice.com
3350 S Fairway St • Visalia, CA 93277

"God created war so that Americans would learn geography." - Mark Twain

Political Fix

Catherine Doe

No Matter How You Vote, Crazy Wins

OK, it's official. Those opposed to chickens and mini goats inside Visalia's city limits are as crazy as those collecting signatures to pass an initiative in favor of making them legal.

Here in our office, for expediency's sake, we refer to each side as pro-goaters or anti-goaters, and both have made some pretty ridiculous statements. An anti-goater claimed that the Urban Farmers for Food Freedom (UFFF) is "holding Visalia hostage" over the initiative process. A pro-goater said in referring to a city council public hearing on chickens, "why open up this microphone to the people if you are dictators in your hearts?"

Those of us in the middle are scratching our heads wondering "what's the big deal?" Just go to the ballot box, mark yes or no, and call it a day. And if the initiative passes, go buy yourself a bulldog mastiff.

Now, the *Valley Voice* has become a target of the anti-goaters. A frequent user of social media posted on Jim Reeves *Alternating Currents* blog that the *Valley Voice* "dropped whatever adherence they felt toward journalistic ethics (you'd have to be at City Council meetings to get the whole picture), got carried away with the Gaggle of Goat Herders and became "one" --I mean ONE-- with them, determined to personally march their movement to a victory in *our town.* This backfired badly. After that and a number of other serious oversteps I stopped reading and recommending the paper."

While reporting on the impending small farm animal initiative, the *Valley Voice* has not taken sides. But because of the subject matter, the staff has had a hard time resisting publishing humorous cartoons, headlines and pictures when covering the issue. The pro-goaters have not taken notice or they have enjoyed our humor.

Not so for the anti-goaters. They became unglued over a T-shirt.

In July, The UFFF was giving away T shirts at the convention center before a city council meeting. I thought, "cool, a free T-shirt and in my color!" It had symbols of a shovel, fork, goat, chicken and a house that I guess is code for food freedom. My interpretation of food freedom is a second piece of cake--so I picked up two, one for me and one for my daughter.

I immediately slipped the shirt on over my dress because, for some reason, the city council can't work unless their room simulates the same conditions as a meat locker. To my chagrin, I discovered I was caught on video with the UFFF shirt, and the video was posted on-line.

But chagrin is in the eyes of the beholder. I was chagrined because the effect of putting a shirt over my dress made me look fat as a pig, as yet not allowed in residential areas (the pig, not me). But the anti-goaters saw it as blatant support for UFFF's initiative on allowing chickens and mini goats in residential areas. One concerned reader emailed me and asked me to explain how I could wear that T- shirt and concurrently write an unbiased article on the initiative.

On hearing about the T-shirt incident, the other more experienced *Valley Voice* staff cast their eyes askance and shook their heads in disapproval at my egregious breach of journalistic ethics. I scoffed at them, and got on my computer and apologized to our concerned reader--so all is good. With the disgruntled social media user, I'm not so sure.

I have a few take-aways from this experience. First, Jim Reeves' blog is a refreshing break from the typical Tulare County fare. Second, I'm going to be more careful what I wear to city council meetings or go on a diet.

Who Are the Pan Handlers?

After the measles outbreak at Disneyland in February there was an outbreak of hysteria about getting kids vaccinated. The conventional wisdom was that too many parents were getting frivolous exemptions and exposing school kids to deadly diseases. So California passed State Senator Richard Pan's SB277 in July, banning exemptions based on religion. Now all children have to be vaccinated by July 1, 2016, if they want to attend public school. The only exception will be if the child has a compromised immune system.

This immediately spurred the anti-vaxers to mobilize, gathering signatures for a referendum repealing SB277. According to a local Tulare woman involved, "This referendum against SB277 is important to SO many parents of children who would otherwise hit the vaccine mandate at the start of the 2016 school year, because SB277 is slated to go into effect July, 2016. If we get the signatures in the next couple of months, this will go to a November, 2016 vote. This means that ALL parents will be able to enroll their children in school even if they are in kindergarten or 7th grade in September, 2016."

The anti-vaxers position is that the law is an attack on parents' rights and religious freedom. They also say that vaccinations contain mercury that may cause autism. Sen. Pan has been accused of being a mere mouthpiece for big pharma as his campaign last year received $95,000 in donations from the pharmaceutical companies.

So. in addition to the referendum, the anti-vaxers have filed papers to recall Sen. Pan.

Both causes are going to be an uphill battle for the anti-vaxers, but herein lies the fatal flaw with Sen. Pan's recall. The last successful California recall was in 2003, between the amorphous Gov. Gray Davis and the Terminator. Hard choice. Arnold Schwarzenegger went on to serve as governor for eight years. Gov. Davis has not been heard of since.

This current recall, on the other hand, is against a very popular Democrat in a strong Democratic district. Someone has to run against Sen. Pan on the recall ballot. As of yet no one has stepped up to the plate to be his replacement in case the recall is successful. Who is going to sign up for that job? I'm predicting no one electable.

Debating the Debate

In case you missed it, Fox News put on a Republican debate. The analysis started several months before the debate and hasn't stopped since.

Seven presidential candidates who ranked lowest in the polls participated in an afternoon pre-debate. The top 10 candidates in the polls participated in the primetime event. Former Sen. Rick Santorum, who whined bitterly for weeks, didn't make the cut for the adult table. He said that the polls had it wrong.

But actually, the polls nailed it. They have shown a bright light on how weak the Republican pool of candidates was in 2012. Two of the top contenders in 2012, Mr. Santorum and former Texas governor Rick Perry, with all of their name recognition and experience, couldn't even break into the top 10 this year. That's pretty telling. Instead of using all that TV time to whine, why didn't Mr. Santorum roll up his sleeves and fight to get into the top 10 like late-comer and relatively unknown Gov. John Kasich from Ohio?

Fiorina/Rubio

While Californians are convinced that if Dorothy threw a bucket of water on Carly Fiorina she would melt, the rest of the country was pretty smitten with her performance at the kid's table. Political pundits fantasize that, should Senator Marco Rubio win the Republican nomination, he might pick Ms. Fiorina as his running mate. Sen. Rubio was seen as one of the winners of the primetime debate.

But Sen. Rubio might want to think twice about sharing the ticket with Ms. Fiorina, who could forget who is actually running for president. Her confidence and ego regularly outstrip reality, but has been an effective driving force in her campaign. Ms. Fiorina got fired as CEO of Hewlett-Packard in 2005, was fired from Sen. McCain's presidential campaign in 2008, and lost in a landslide senatorial election to Sen. Barbara Boxer in 2010. On paper she is a loser, but on stage, and in her mind, she is a winner. She is incredibly intelligent and an entertaining and able debater. Who out there wouldn't pay good money to see a debate between Ms. Fiorina and Hillary Clinton? Could this be HBO's next high pay-out boxing match?

Trump versus Sanders

Right now, Donald Trump and Sen. Bernie Sanders are drawing the biggest crowds to their rallies, with Sen. Sanders winning on that score by far. In Portland, Oregon, Sen. Sanders drew 28,000 fans at a campaign stop, something the other candidates can only dream about. His poll numbers are great in Iowa and New Hampshire--comfortable stomping grounds for him.

Mr. Trump, the other perceived winner of the Republican debate, said of Sen. Sanders on MSNBC, "he's struck a nerve on the other side and I've struck, I think, an even bigger nerve on the Republican side, the conservative side. It's amazing."

But how is Sen. Sanders going to do in the South Carolina primary against Hillary Clinton? African Americans appreciate Sen. Sanders' civil rights record but they love Ms. Clinton. He has been targeted by the Black Lives Matter movement because it is perceived that Sen. Sanders' platform does not highlight how he plans to combat racism. But Ms. Clinton, who addresses racism in the United States regularly, can also be said to be riding on the coattails of her husband, who was nicknamed "the first Black American president."

The nation would see a Trump versus Sanders match up as the ultimate Republican/Democrat battle--but it would not be. Mr. Trump can actually barely be called a Republican, having switched parties in 2009. According to the GOP he is philosophically not a conservative. Not so long ago he was pro-choice, and pro universal health care. He criticizes cuts to social security, Medi-Cal and Medicaid and will not sign Grover Norquist's ant-tax pledge. He and Sen. Sanders would actually make better running mates than adversaries.

And Finally ……

Does anyone really know what happens when you die? Ohio Governor John Kasich apparently does. Gov. Kasich was quoted as saying, "When you die and get to the meeting with St. Peter, he's probably not going to ask you much about what you did about keeping government small. But he's going to ask what you did for the poor. You better have a good answer."

My point exactly, "you better have a good answer."

My husband said his answer when arriving at the pearly gates will be "trick or treat?" But Gov. Kasich's answer took my breath away. I was just saying a few days prior the exact same thing to my daughter. We were pondering over the karma of some extended family members and I said, "What are they going to have to say for themselves to St. Peter when they reach the pearly gates?"

I spend a lot of time with my teenage daughter. She does most of the talking because her and her friends' lives are a tad bit more interesting than the Republican debate. When I do speak it is met with a lot of eye rolls. She calls me one of God's special little people. I don't know if that is a compliment or an insult, but she doesn't believe in St. Peter or the Pearly Gates. So I get no traction with her.

But hearing a national figure, a presidential candidate no less, make the same comment validated the possibility. The difference between he and I is that I have no idea what happens after you die--I'm just hedging my bets.

That begs the questions, since no one really knows what happens after you die, why doesn't everyone hedge their bets? What if there is a life review and you are held accountable for everything you have done? At Heaven's gates you can't hide behind the same old lame excuses, self righteousness,

POLITICAL FIX continued on **4 »**

Experience and Growth Phase for Locally Based Tucoemas Federal Credit Union

Tucoemas Federal Credit Union announces a new chief financial officer has been added to the Tucoemas family. Sherry Belcher joins the team and brings with her 20 years of management and financial experience. Belcher worked at banks and credit unions in Tennessee and Georgia prior to joining the Tucoemas team.

Belcher earned her Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management from Covenant College. She also earned credentials as a Credit Union Compliance Expert (CUCE) from Credit Union National Association. She brings with her to the team and experienced professional, level assistance in all auditing and accounting operations. Belcher will be responsible for budget management and financial compliance.

Julie Wheeler has also joined the Tucoemas management team as the Porterville Branch Manager. Wheeler has 11 years' experience as branch manager for credit unions in Florida, Indiana and Georgia. She has been a senior loan officer and is currently attending Liberty University.

Wheeler is a veteran in consumer lending and building member relationships. Along with managing the branch in Porterville, Wheeler will also assist Tucoemas members with all their lending and savings needs. Wheeler is also a California Notary Public.

Saeed Goraya returns to Tucoemas, and joins the administration team. He was previously with Tucoemas for three-and-a-half years as the marketing manager. Goraya has 15 years' experience in technology. He attended San Jose State where he studied mathematics and computer science. He graduated from CUNA Marketing Manager School in 2011.

Goraya will take on a new role as the social media administrator where he will be responsible for the website and all social media platforms. With the ever-evolving social media landscape, Tucoemas has targeted growth for this area to better serve its members. Goraya will assist the marketing team and systems departments with special projects using his combined expertise in marketing and technology.

Sonia Smalley, loan manager at the Tucoemas - Whitendale branch in Visalia, recently graduated from Western CUNA Management School. The three-year course with a total of six weeks spent on campus at Pomona College in Claremont included completion of two complex projects with one focused on history to present credit union conditions and the other focused on present to projections out three years.

Smalley has worked for Tucoemas FCU for 28 years. She has been in the lending department since 1991. Smalley was promoted to loan supervisor in 2006 and became the loan manager in 2012. She manages the loan department and assists members with all their lending needs – VISA, personal loans, and all types of new and used vehicle loans.

Homeless

Continued from p. 1

when they're on the trail."

The day Lawrence was cited, he was with a group of friends. When asked by the officer, if the officer had spoken to him on the previous day, Lawrence refused to answer the question.

"That was about the extent of the conversation," he said.

Lawrence and another man, a veteran who was not homeless but who argued with the officer, were ticketed.

"I had to pay the fine, sort of as a deposit," Lawrence said. "I'd get it back, but couldn't get a hearing without paying."

Frustrated by what he suspected was an unconstitutional act, Lawrence was able to contact the American Civil Liberties Union with the help of Union of Hope. The issue has since been addressed with Tulare City Hall.

"When a subject is issued a citation they do have an opportunity to contest the citation," Garcia said, "and whether or not the people are able to afford the fine, we do have a hardship waiver they can fill out."

"They have 15 business days to appeal that citation," said James Ussery, code enforcement officer for the TPD. "They come into PD and fill out a hearing form. At that point they can request that hardship policy."

Creating a New Hope

That policy's quick deadline, however, still presents problems for the homeless, who often have no transportation, an issue among many Union of Hope hopes to eventually address, along with other practical matters, such as safe sleeping areas for the homeless, storage for their possessions, and access to restrooms and bathing facilities. Lawrence would like to eventually see a network of basic shelters providing those necessities, as well a shelter to house residents who are working to reenter society.

"I came to the point in my life where I was hopeless, but maybe I can do something positive for others," said Lawrence, who has since found an apartment and is getting back on his feet. "I'd seen these people who had lost hope. My life was like a chess game in check. I thought hope would make a big difference."

Upcoming Union of Hope Meetings

Union of Hope will hold a pair of meetings this month. The first at 6-7:30 pm on Thursday, Aug. 20 in the Blue Room of the Visalia City Library. At that meeting, members of the ACLU and Union of Hope will be on hand to assist homeless people who feel they have been mistreated by the police. Complaint forms will be available, as will assistance in completing the forms.

"This is regarding people who have complaints with the police department," said Raoul Gallegos, a retired social working and member of Union of Hope. "We've got one lady, the police roughed her up and broke her arm. Another man had his encampment torn down, and they threw away his medications and belongings. That's illegal. They're human beings."

A similar meeting will be held in Tulare from 11am to 1pm on Saturday, Aug. 22 at Garcia Family Pizza, 724 W. Inyo Ave.

Here to Stay

Union of Hope is currently seeking nonprofit status, which the group hopes will make their mission of creating a more compassionate awareness of homelessness and changing local policy regarding more easy to accomplish.

"We've been around a year, maybe a year and a half. We've been to several city council meetings," said member Steve Pendleton. "We're doing outreach to several homeless people in Tulare. A couple of months ago, our big concern was getting a summer shelter for these people, we're thinking the armory. We got over a thousand signatures. We presented that to the (Tulare) City Council. They did nothing about that. I was at that meeting. The place was packed. The misinformation presented at that meeting was so appalling. People got up and said the homeless wanted encampments. They said there are going to camps at this place and that place. It just wasn't true. It was so provincial and racist, it made me ashamed I live in Tulare County."

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

money, or political power that always worked here on Earth. What if St. Peter is standing there guarding the gates to Heaven and asks, "did you serve God, others or just yourself?" What are you going to say?

Gov. Kasich is a conservative from my grandmother's era. While governor of Ohio, he cut income taxes, government regulation, battled organized labor and approved new restrictions on abortion and voting rights. But he also spared several inmates from execution, supported higher taxes on cigarettes and fracking of natural gas deposits and expanded healthcare access under the Affordable Care Act. It was his explanation about providing health care to the poor that provoked his spiel about the pearly gates.

During the debate he was asked what he thought of same-sex marriage. He isn't a fan, but said that if God gave him unconditional love then why shouldn't he give same-sex couples unconditional love?

When his time comes, he is going to have a good answer.

Real Estate

It Is Simultaneously a Seller and Buyer's Market

Nancy Vigran

Since the real estate market bottomed out eight to nine years ago, it has slowly been making its way back and now has become a seller's market, but is also a good time to buy.

"It goes up in stair steps, rather than a bell curve" said Richard Knee, multiple listing service chair of the Kings County Board of Realtors.

To show the market turn around, Knee referenced one house in Hanford that has sold three times in nine years.

The house was built in 2004, and is a "bread and butter house," he said, meaning it is in a good location, with three bedrooms and two baths in 1,400 square feet of living space.

At the market peak, in 2006, the house sold for $280,000, he said. It was foreclosed upon and sold in 2011 for $160,000.

The house is once again pending sale at the moment with a listing at $195,000, which is probably close to what it is selling for, he said.

This one house reflects where the market was just before it fell, where it fell to and how far it has come back into what is now a more stable environment.

Year-to-date, 953 single-family residences have been recorded in the multiple listing service for Kings County, Knee said. Of those, 485 have sold, 219 are in escrow and 249 are currently on the market.

"It is a very strong seller's market," he said.

Of the 485 homes that have sold, nearly 50 percent sold in the first 30 days of listing, and another 18 percent sold within 31-60 days of being on the market.

"This is another indication of a very strong seller's market," he said.

Most of the homes which sold quickly are in the lower-to-mid-market range, while higher priced homes are taking longer to sell.

But there are also still very good rates available, which makes it a good time for buyers and probably a good reason that the market is doing so well, Knee said.

"There is a pent-up-desire to own," he said. "Everyone needs to own their own home."

Kings County, and especially in and around Hanford, needs a higher inventory of homes available, he said. There is a need for new construction, he added.

Knee referenced one residential development in Hanford that has sold 10 new homes in the past month.

And, they are mid-to-high end homes. Quite a remarkable feat, he said.

Knee admits that he is not really sure just why the market is so good at this time.

"I see this stuff happening (around the world), what they are showing (on the news) and, to me, the world is unstable," he said. "But yet, the US is doing very well."

It is not only the housing market that has improved and is now doing well, so is the commercial market doing much better, said Mike Porte, SIOR, senior vice president of Newmark Grubb Pearson Financial in Visalia.

"Following the residential market, retail growth has taken place," he said. "And as retail does better, then follows industrial.

"There is a lot of money on the sidelines and people are taking advantage of good buys, before it (the market) goes up."

With more buildings being sold, some new development is starting to move forward in the area, with new pads being readied as potential building sites.

The price of rental spaces is also seeing an increase he said.

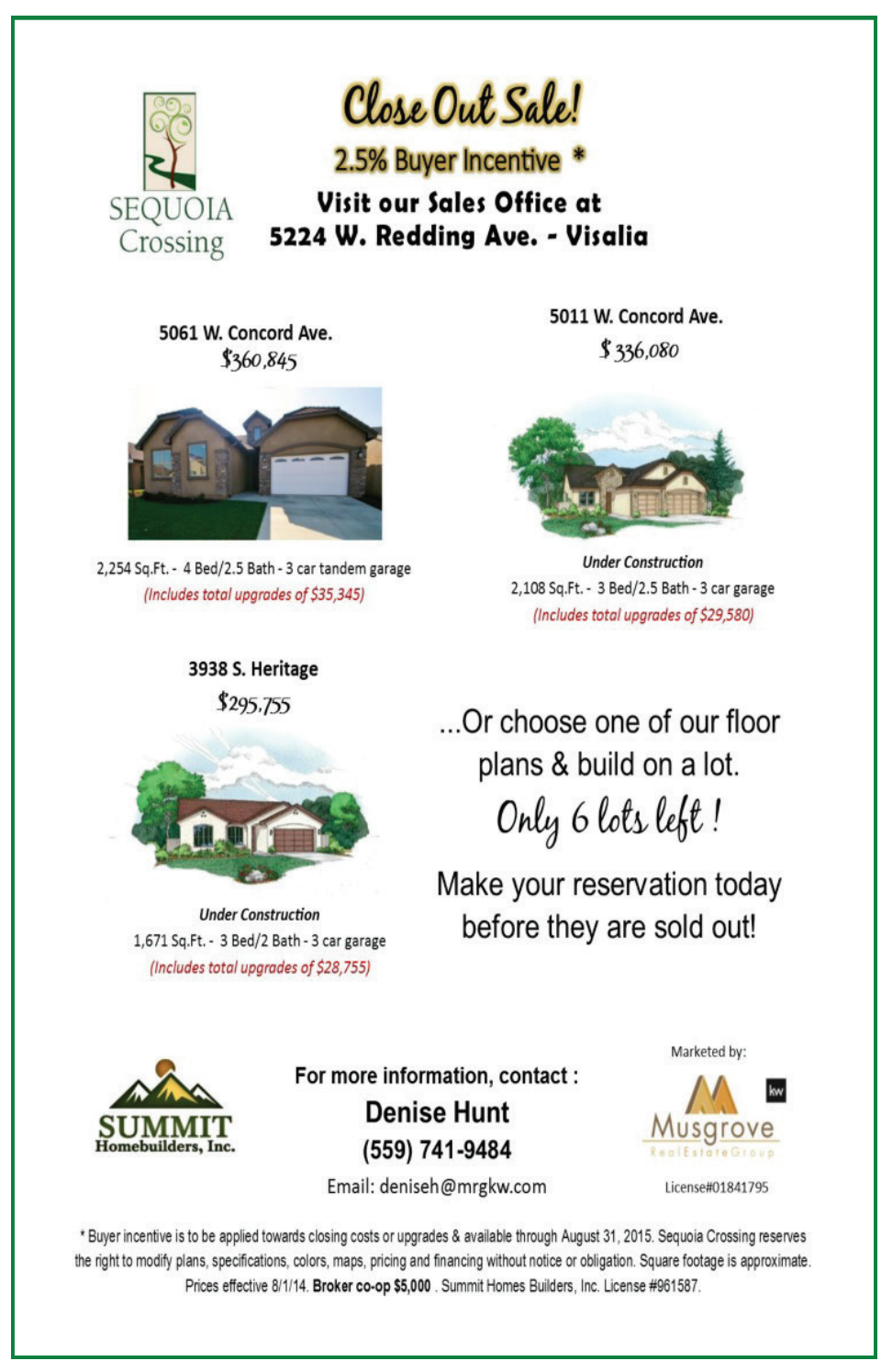
"There were a lot of office buildings sitting empty," he said, "and now they aren't."

Similar to residential loan rates, there are still reasonable rates out there for investment property as well, Porte said.

For those thinking of selling, be it residential or commercial, it is a good time to sell, these realtors indicated. Properly priced properties, that are not too high, are selling quickly.

For those looking for their own home or investment property, it is also a good time to buy, with reasonable and low rates available.

"Real estate can be a premise vehicle to getting wealthy," Knee said. "It doesn't take a lot to get into your first home. Once it's paid for, buy a second and rent the first one."



Agriculture

Amid Challenges, Almond Farmers Accelerate Harvest

Christine Souza, CFBF

They've faced a variety of challenges this season: the drought, which led to water shortages, removal of orchards and close scrutiny of their irrigation practices, plus concerns about chill hours and, in some cases, an uneven bloom. Now, California almond growers are accelerating harvest and advancing their opinions about whether the crop will meet its preseason estimates.

A close observer of the almond business, David Doll, a University of California pomology farm advisor in Merced County, said the drought has taken a toll.

"There's heartache associated with (being a farm advisor) because you care about farmers and really enjoy farming and you see issues with orchards that were beyond the control of the farmer," Doll said. "We're in a natural disaster and I think so many times we forget about that."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated farmers would harvest 1.8 billion pounds of almonds this season, down 4 percent from last year, and Almond Board of California President and CEO Richard Waycott said the estimate "seems to be a pretty good number."

"The outlook for the season's crop is for a pretty stable supply situation, a pretty stable market situation and probably, a pretty stable pricing situation," Waycott said.

As this year's almond harvest ramps up, farmers in the state's different growing regions report varying observations of yields and drought impacts. Some farmers have had to remove trees to divert water to more productive blocks, whereas other growers' orchards are relatively unaffected.

Farmer Kent Stenderup of Arvin checks the quality of the almond crop as the Nonpareil variety is being harvested at his Kern County farm. He said yields look good so far, even given the drought. Photo: Cecillia Parsons/CFBF

Growers who have been severely affected by the drought, Doll said, "are relying on poor-quality water and those issues are starting to catch up with them."

Younger almond trees that are now bearing a crop might be able to supplement volume lost from older trees that have been either abandoned, removed or have reduced yields, he said.

"Based on the physiology and the water stress, I speculate that we'll probably have smaller-than-normal (kernel) sizes. The flip end of that is we have a lot of new orchards coming on, and young orchards tend to produce larger kernel sizes due to the vigor that is associated with those trees," Doll said.

Kern County farmer Kent Stenderup said his almond trees look good, although it is too early to determine overall yields. There is added pressure from navel orangeworm and some hull rot, he said, but the kernels he has seen are of good size and quality.

Regarding drought impacts, Stenderup said he faces some salinity issues and last year had to lower several wells.

"We've changed cropping plans, but I have not fallowed anything yet," said Stenderup, who represents the Blue Diamond Growers cooperative on the Almond Board and who grows row crops as well as almonds. "For row crops, we double-crop sometimes, but as a result of the drought, we are not double-cropping. I've redirected so that I have enough water on my almonds."

To the north, almond grower Dan Cummings of Capay Farms in Chico said his almonds are in good shape, "with yields better this year than last year."

David Phippen, almond grower and owner of Travaille and Phippen Inc. in Manteca, is processing almonds for growers to the north and south and said the crop of Nonpareil almonds from those areas "looks to be off."

"Early reports aren't good," Phippen said. "A lot of us are hearing 15 percent off on the Nonpareil. I was hopeful that it wouldn't be, but I'm not real surprised."

Phippen said his almond trees received enough water during the season and experienced a good bloom, so he is having trouble understanding what happened to the crop, saying he "can't tell what is causing the Nonpareil not to set."

Some growers suggested the

ALMONDS continued on **9 »**

Settle the Dust!

Safer alternative to road oil!
Economical - Clean - Quick Re-Entry

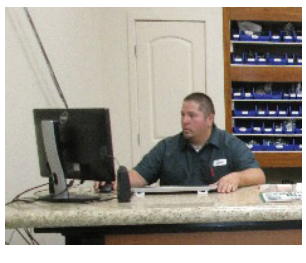
BASIC INDUSTRIES

Visit our New Showroom!

- Service Truck Units
- Stationary Shop Compressors
- Parts & Service
- 5 to 13 HP Gas & Electric
- Units in Stock

We are here to serve you!

We Balance Quality, Price and Service while Maintaining adequate Inventory!



(559) 757-3123
Fwy 99 & Ave. 120
P.O. Box 255
Pixley, CA 93256
www/basic-industries.net

PENNY NEWMAN GRAIN, INCORPORATED
Established 1878

Get the Penny Newman Grain Inc.
Growing Better Seeds Advantage

Wheat	Class	Awns	Boot Silage	Soft Dough Silage	Hay	Grain
Summit 515	Hard Red	Yes		✓		✓
Blanca Grande 515	Hard White	Yes				✓
Cal Rojo	Hard Red	Yes		✓		✓
Ultra	Hard Red	Yes		✓		✓*
Durum						
Fortissimo	Durum	Yes				✓
Volante	Durum	Yes				✓
Awnless Triticale						
Camelot	Triticale	No		✓	✓	✓*
Merlin	Triticale	No	✓		✓	
Roundtable Blend	Triticale	No	✓		✓	
Silage and Grain Triticale						
158EP	Triticale	Yes		✓		✓*
115	Triticale	Yes		✓		✓*
105	Triticale	Yes		✓		✓*

*Grain for feed only

Penny-Newman supplies the leading varieties of wheat and triticale seed in California.

With Syngenta genetics, Penny-Newman provides growers with seed bred specifically for California's growing regions.

Syngenta varieties consistently place on top of independent yield trials for grain and forage use, and Syngenta milling wheat varieties set the standard for quality by end-users.

syngenta

Contact a dealer near you or call Penny-Newman 559.448.8800

Agriculture

Ranchers Remain Cautious Despite El Niño Forecast

Ching Lee, CFBF

With talk of a strong El Niño brewing and with it, the potential for above-average precipitation this fall and winter, California livestock ranchers say they are hopeful about getting some relief from the drought. But they remain cautious about their plans for rebuilding their herds.

Poor pasture conditions and high feed costs have pummeled California ranchers during the last four years of drought, forcing many of them to sell their animals, even when market demand gave signals that they should be expanding.

Ranchers say they're reluctant to put too much stock in weather predictions that might not pan out. They also point to other factors unrelated to the drought that could thwart their ability to grow, such as the high price of cattle and availability of land.

At a recent cattle sale he attended, Mariposa County cattle rancher Tony Toso noted how top-selling heifers were going for as much as $4,200 per head, a price he described as "phenomenal." He was not in the market to buy, he said, because he doesn't have enough land to expand.

Still, he said there are signs that some ranchers may be thinking about rebuilding, with "heifer retention starting to get traction."

"If we get good rain this year and the feed looks half decent, guys are going to get optimistic fast," Toso said.

Anticipation of rain or forage growth usually drives cattle prices "through the roof, because people are trying to restock their herds," said Dan McQueeney, who leases his land in Napa County for cattle grazing. Cattle prices also rise when corn prices are lower, because feedlots are buying more cattle, he added.

McQueeney said he is not planning to buy any cattle either. He liquidated his herd during the drought when he ran short on feed and won't be getting back in the business. He said he didn't want to go into debt buying hay, having seen his family "struggle to dig out of the hole" when they tried to "feed through the drought in the '70s."

Lack of grasses on California pastures from four years of drought has caused cattle ranchers to reduce the size of their herds. Ranchers say they remain cautious about the prospect of rebuilding those herds, despite long-range predictions of the potential for a wet winter. Photo: Richard Green/California Farm Bureau Federation

With a son who just graduated college and wants to go into the cattle business, Sacramento County rancher Walter Hardesty said he would like to expand, if only he could find more land to lease. Although he's expanded his search from the Sacramento Valley to Oregon, he said affordable grazing land is hard to find, with ranches being converted to trees and vines.

"We retained a lot of our heifers and are ready to go, but being that it's short feed everywhere, nobody has any ranches for lease," he said.

Buying cattle at current high prices and then leasing ground to feed them is a "big risk on your investment," Hardesty added, noting that he would rather expand by retaining heifers, which would take him two to three years to double the size of his herd.

Toso said ranchers who operate in the foothills are more limited in their choices, because they are careful about buying cows not already exposed to ticks that spread diseases such as foothill abortion and anaplasmosis, often a source of economic loss.

While he's hoping for more rain, Solano County sheep and cattle rancher Richard Hamilton said he is not making any drastic changes as he tries to build back his numbers slowly. He has maintained the size of his flock, but he made some significant cuts to his cattle herd two years ago. This year he retained more replacements, but he said he's not trying to get back to where he was yet.

"I'm not saying El Niño is not ever going to happen," he said, "but I'm not

RANCHERS continued on **9 »**

Production

Continued from p. 1

number one in a lot of areas concerning ag, but the most significant was export. Tulare County is the number one agriculture exporting county in the country, with the number one export being citrus.

Supervisor Allen Ishida, a citrus grower himself, said that 2014 "was a tremendous year in the business" but that the industry had to pay in terms of water. There also was a massive backlog during last year's port strike where growers couldn't get their product to its destination.

"I see a sharp decline next year for citrus industry," said Ishida.

After citrus, the top exporting products are grapes, pistachios and almonds. Tulare County exports to 90 countries, up from 84 last year, with the number one country being South Korea.

At a BOS meeting last year, when the Annual Ag Report was given, Supervisor Phil Cox asked Kinoshita, "How can we maintain this growth?"

"Through water storage," Kinoshita replied. "If we have one more year without rain it will be very sad."

But Tulare County did have one more year of drought and, to Kinoshita's delight, managed to increase production by 10 percent.

Supervisor Steve Worthley expressed how amazed he was that the county could make so much more money with so many acres taken out of production.

"It's hard to believe anyone could out-rank us," he said.

Last year Tulare County came in first in agriculture production followed by Kern then Fresno. Tulare County was able to increase its production despite the drought because most of the producing land sits on top of its water source, except around Terra Bella. Farmers supplement insufficient surface water from the Tule and Kaweah Rivers by pumping groundwater. The west side of Fresno County, normally a billion-dollar producer, doesn't have that luxury. It depends almost exclusively on surface water from the state and the federal systems, from which they received no water the past two years.

The most notable difference between 2013 and 2014 was the decrease in field crops, which resulted in an increase in permanent crops. This is a direct result of the drought and an excellent example of the regions farmers' resiliency and their ability to adapt. Permanent crops increased by 22,689 acres and field crops decreased by 274,635 acres. Lucrative permanent crops such as pistachios didn't just replace field crops but were planted on uncultivated land where there is reliable water.

Tulare County has all but assumed that it will be the number one agricultural producing county in the United States for the second year in a row. Fresno traditionally held that honor, but fell to third place behind Kern and Tulare counties last year. Because of the lack of water on the west side, and Kern County having much less dairy, Tulare County likely will stay number one. Kern County's main crop is grapes, a crop that dominated the industry for a decade there and in Fresno, which always had put the counties on top.

To access the 2014 Tulare County Annual Crop and Livestock Report and previous county crop reports online, visit http://bit.ly/1JboP5p.

Western and Eastern Therapies Working Together

Complementary therapy being used with success in hospitals

Robert Brandolino
Total Healthy Lifestyle

Jennifer Bradley was a volunteer at the Markey Cancer Center in Kentucky. She began to give Jin Shin Jyutsu sessions to patients at the hospital and in a short time something remarkable happened.

Doctors started to see that their patients were needing less pain medications. They also observed less stress and anxiety in their patients as well as a reduction of side effects from chemo, radiation and medications. Dr. Evers, director of the Markey Cancer Center in Kentucky, got together with Jennifer Bradley and together they received a $49,000 grant from the Lexington Cancer Foundation to implement and study the effects of Jin Shin Jyutsu in a hospital setting. The results have been nothing short of amazing.

Jin Shin Jyutsu is becoming a desirable complementary therapy offered to patients in conventional medical practices and hospitals like the Markey Cancer Center in Kentucky, the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, Marin Oncology Associates and Marin General Hospital. Jin Shin Jyutsu has provided significant relief to patients suffering from a variety of complaints, while easily supporting whatever treatment regimen their medical doctors have prescribed. As an effective complement to conventional medicine, Jin Shin Jyutsu has earned its way into hospitals as a non-invasive therapy with well-documented results for patients with diverse health challenges.

The Total Healthy Lifestyle storefront in the Sequoia Mall. Photo courtesy Total Healthy Lifestyle.

As a time-honored Japanese healing art, JSJ, though having conceptual similarities with acupuncture, acupressure and massage, is a gentle, non-invasive, over the clothing therapy that works without needles, pressure or rubbing. The practitioner will check your pulses and then conduct the appropriate "flows". A flow is a series of predetermined holds the practitioner applies with a light touch along the 52 energetic points to redirect or unblock stagnant energy. It is the stagnation of energy that is said to contribute to illness and disease.

According to doctors, JSJ has been helpful with autoimmune issues, back pain, leg cramps, neuropathy, fatigue, anxiety, nausea, stress, sleeplessness, pain management (chronic and acute), negative side effects from chemo, radiation and medications, allergies, asthma, depression, headaches, respiratory problems and a host of other conditions.

To see a video of Jennifer Bradley's story, including feedback from doctors, or to find a Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner in your area, visit: www.JSJvideo.com

It's important to share such information with your doctor, or health care provider and always consult with them before starting anything new. If inclined, share the video with your doctor so that they will have a better understanding of Jin Shin Jyutsu and how they might incorporate it to benefit you and other patients in their practice. The more that local hospitals (such as Adventist Health, Kaweah Delta, Tulare District) become aware of and integrate Jin Shin Jyutsu (as did Marin General Hospital, California Pacific Medical Center and Markey Cancer Center), the more the public will benefit from this complementary therapy that is safe, tested, effective and without side effects.

Jin Shin Jyutsu is not currently covered by health insurance so the more that hospitals and doctors incorporate JSJ, (as was the case with acupuncture) the sooner it will be recognized as a therapy worthy of insurance coverage.

Total Healthy Lifestyle offers Jin Shin Jyutsu at its Visalia location inside the Sequoia Mall.

(559) 553-2172 www.TotalHealthyLifestyle.com

NEED A FAMILY DOCTOR?
NOW OPEN
202 W. WILLOW-
5TH FLOOR
(NORTHSIDE OF KAWEAH DELTA PARKING LOT)
624-4820
MONDAY-FRIDAY
8 AM - 5 PM
OFFERING:
Family Medicine
Pediatric Services
- Well-Child Checks
- Immunizations
- School Physicals
Women's Health
And more!
SE HABLA ESPAÑOL
SAME-DAY APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE!
Kaweah Delta
Family Medicine Center
A division of Kaweah Delta Health Care District

Providers needed in Tulare County

Seeking loving individuals to support an adult with special needs.

Must have spare bedroom.
Complete application on site.
Make up to $4,500+/mo.

Meet Wednesdays at 3pm.
3530 W. Mineral King Ave,#A
Visalia, CA 93291

Ask us about our referral bonus

California MENTOR
Family Home Agency
559-636-2894
www.MentorsWanted.com

Lindsay Plans Strict Water Conservation Measures

Dave Adalian

Despite excellent results from a voluntary water conservation program already in place, harsher measures and stiffer fines could be on the way for water users in Lindsay.

At a meeting of the City Council on August 11, the foundation was laid for adding two sections to the city's plan to conserve water. The effort is part of measures the city has taken to meet a state-mandated 25 percent reduction in water use.

"The citizens here have been doing a great job of conservation at 35 percent," said Interim City Manager Bill Zigler.

However, the city has only reduced water usage by 19 percent on the year compared to the baseline usage in 2013, meaning additional measures are required if Lindsay is to meet the state's goal and avoid sanctions.

Amending the Current Plan

Up for consideration were adding two phases to the city's three-phase conservation plan. The city is currently in Phase III, which includes educational programs and outreach, restrictions on municipal watering, changes to building codes related to landscape irrigation, restricted watering days and times, prohibition of washing down sidewalks and driveways, and fines for violations. A 15-percent rate increase if conservation goals are not met is also possible under the current restrictions.

Proposed changes would add two intensified levels to the plan in place. In Phase IV restrictions, watering would be limited to just two days a week between 9 pm and 9 am, as would the washing of vehicles and the refilling of spas and pools. Car washing, allowed only with hoses with shut-off nozzles, will be limited to 30 minutes. No watering would be allowed at all for 48 hours after any measurable rainfall. Under Phase V, the most intense level, no watering or car washing will be allowed at all. Parks, schools and similar facilities would be allowed one watering day per week.

Under both new phases, violators would receive only one written warning before facing fines. First offenses carry a $50 fine. Second violations would cost $150, and any further violations carry a $250 fine. Fines will be included in violators' water bills.

Already Fighting the Dryness

"We're currently in Phase III. To meet the state requirement of 25 percent or two days a week, we automatically have council approval to go to stage four, but I think we can afford that," City Services Director Mike Camarena told the Council. "July figures for water conservation ... were tabulated, and we saved just over 35 percent in July. And, so our annual is just under 19. So, we're on the way to hitting the 25 percent, but there's still not a guarantee. July was, in a comparative sense, it was a relatively mild month. And, August so far has been a hot month. So, the recommendation would be go to Phase IV. We can watch numbers and always go backwards, or if necessary forward."

The changes, introduced for a first reading at the August 11 meeting, could receive final approval at the next meeting of the Council on August 25. Its provisions would go into effect 30 days after passage.

City Revenue Could Suffer

Concerns were raised about the new restrictions effect on the city's revenue as users consume less water. Camarena, however, said the city has already taken that into consideration and its budget reflects and expected decrease over the next two years.

"We projected ... out from 2012 to 2017, the projections of what revenue were, and we've accommodated for that," he said. "So far, it hasn't been a problem. We should be OK for this fiscal year."

Conservation Here to Stay

Camarena also warned that these restrictions will likely continue even if the drought lessens in the near future, as arid conditions will almost certainly return at some point.

"It's a change in mentality in the way we use water," he said. "People have to just see this is going to come back, whether it comes back in a year or the year after. We're still going to be charged with managing ground water in a much different way."

If the proposed changes are approved a second time by the council, Lindsay water users will be mailed a pamphlet explaining the range of restrictions to water use. While the changes could cause consternation among customers, they are needed to keep Lindsay in the state's good graces, Zigler told the Council.

"The ordinance you just approved is going to give us a little bit of insurance should something get a little sideways with the state," he said. "We're just showing we took every foreseeable fair measure to ensure we were in conformance with their 25-percent mandate."

Almonds

Continued from p. 6

problem relates to a lack of chilling temperatures needed to set a crop, known as chill hours—a concern shared by farmers and UC researchers early in the year.

For almonds, which require between 400 and 600 hours of chill, Phippen said, growers recorded 500 hours of chill, yet daily temperatures during the winter sometimes escalated rapidly, from lows in the 30s to highs in the 70s. Researchers say warm daytime temperatures in winter and spring may have canceled out a portion of the chill hour benefits.

Doll pointed out that harvest is about 12 days earlier than usual. Orchards in some parts of the state experienced a scattered bloom, he said, which makes for a more challenging harvest.

"Since bloom was long, ripening is now uneven and that creates a whole myriad of issues," Doll said. "Harvesting is more challenging because you have to wait longer to harvest and the nuts that split earlier are more susceptible to (navel orangeworm), hull rot and those types of concerns."

At the Almond Board, Waycott noted a slight shift in global demand in July consumption figures. Traditionally, 70 percent of California almonds are sold to export markets and 30 percent for domestic consumption, but numbers shifted slightly to 65 percent for export and 35 percent domestic. Sales to Russia have declined as a result of that nation's embargo on Western food products, Waycott said, whereas markets for almonds remain strong in India and stable in Western Europe.

"We don't consider any market even as close to mature. We see the whole world as an opportunity, especially with the healthy snacking habits around the world," Waycott said, noting that almonds have been the No. 1 nut used in new-product introductions worldwide.

(Christine Souza is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at csouza@cfbf.com.)

This article reproduced with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Ranchers

Continued from p. 7

going to get overzealous, because our pastures have suffered over the last few years and Mother Nature needs a chance to build them back up before we think about any major increase of anything."

In the sheep business, Hamilton said there are other issues that could make expansion more difficult, such as predation, the high cost and availability of labor, and the loss of crop residue and alfalfa fields on which sheep ranchers depend for feed. The overall decline in the nation's sheep numbers also has weakened the sector's infrastructure, he added.

"There'd have to be some major changes in the sheep industry for me to consider ramping my sheep numbers up any higher than they are now," he said.

Some ranchers, such as Sam Travioli, who runs cattle in Tulare County, have started to rebuild. He had to reduce more than half his herd during the last few years due to lack of feed. Having had "a decent grass year," Travioli said, he "kept more heifers than usual in anticipation of the rains." He estimated it will probably take him about five years to get back his numbers.

"If we get good rains this winter and have a good season, I think you'll see a lot more rebuilding next year," he said.

For many ranchers, the decision to keep or sell calves likely won't come until next spring, said Roger Ingram, a University of California Cooperative Extension farm advisor for Placer and Nevada counties.

Even though the state received some heavy rains last fall, he noted the dry spring did not produce much grass, which means there won't be much feed on the ground this fall, limiting ranchers from increasing their herds now. Even if there's adequate moisture this fall and winter, grasses won't grow much until March, he added.

"It's not an instantaneous kind of thing, like, here's a bunch of rain and here's a bunch of grass," he said. "It would translate to better forage conditions in the spring, but this fall and early winter will still be kind of tight."

Many calves are born from October through December, Ingram noted, and they are weaned in May or June. Ranchers who decide to retain a heifer will typically wait six months to a year before breeding her, so getting a calf from that animal will probably take two to three years.

Lower hay prices have helped ranchers, he noted, but cheaper hay won't influence them to do much herd expansion until range conditions improve, even if they plan to buy cattle.

"Cattle prices are probably at their highest level ever, but as numbers begin to build, the value of that cow will drop, so you've got to watch the depreciation on that cow," he added.

(Ching Lee is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at clee@cfbf.com.)

This article reproduced with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation.

HADLEY-MARCOM
FUNERAL CHAPEL

DIGNIFIED AND AFFORDABLE, WITHOUT COMPROMISE.

Full Burial Service
$ 3,785*
Includes 20 gauge steel casket (3 colors), visitation, funeral service, register book, memorial folders, and tribute DVD.

Full Cremation Service
$ 3,785*
Includes rental casket, visitation, funeral service, register book, memorial folders, basic urn, cremation and tribute DVD.

Direct Cremation
Actual Cost-No Hidden Fees
$ 1,395*
Includes cremation in our family-owned crematory. Alternative container, basic urn and local and state permits.

*Based upon the purchase of a funeral package with this ad. Plus sales tax.
Cemetery cost not included. At need only. Prices subject to change without notice.
FD 2129

1700 W. Caldwell Ave., Visalia www.hadley-marcom.com (559) 625-8900

Solar Panels & Products
Solar Installations
Solar System Repair
Energy Management

BEST PRICES IN THE VALLEY

AltSys Solar Inc.

1434 E. Tulare Ave.
Tulare, Ca 93274
Sales@altsyssolar.com

www.altsyssolar.com
559.688.2544
Contractor Lic#944549

Hidden Valley

Continued from p. 1

Ham is vice chair of the commission.

Back to City Council

With the refusal to reaffirm the 2013 decision, the issue now goes back to the city council for consideration.

"So there goes that," said Commission Chair Steve Froberg. "I guess that'll be transmitted to the city council, which has the discretion of sending it right back down to us."

Froberg voted against not affirming the 2013 decision. Wording of the motion not to affirm the decision meant a yes vote would deny the reaffirmation. The strange syntax caused confusion among members of the commission, who asked several times how their votes would be interpreted. Voting yes with Fernandez and Ham were Amjer Nahal and Travis Paden. Commissioners Richard Douglas and Michael Johnston were opposed. The council will likely send the issue back to the planning commission for reconsideration should they decide to pursue the sale.

Parks and Rec Says No

Resistance to selling the parkland was more unified at a meeting of the Hanford Parks and Recreation Commission on July 22. There, the vote to keep the land was a unanimous 7-0. Mickey Stoddard, chairman of the parks and recreation commission, addressed the planning commission to explain the parks and recreation decision.

"I do want to remind the commission that parks and recreation voted unanimously not to sell the property. I think this is a quality of life issue," he said at the August 11 meeting. "If we were to sell that property and give it up, I don't know that we'd be able to do something of that nature in the future."

Safety First

But the only public comment at the July 22 meeting of parks and recreation supported the sale. Former city council member Dan Chin said the proceeds from the sale, estimated at $1.54 million, should be moved to the city's Public Safety Fund.

"Even in the most recent plan that was done by a consultant some years ago, I think four or five years ago, your master plan even said at that time that you should sell off Hidden Valley at that time, or if you are going to develop it, develop it into active, not passive, playgrounds. I don't think it's in the best interest to hang onto Hidden Valley. It doesn't fit into the direction the city is going. We've developed two 20-acre parks." he said. "But, Hanford has more serious needs today that I think are more important, and that's public safety. If we use that proceeds from Hidden Valley Park to build a fire station that can increase response times and serves the whole community, that's the way to go."

Council Wants to Sell

Chin's opinion echoed what City Manager Daryl Pyle says the city council would like to see happen, giving the parks and recreation commission a brief rundown of the thinking on July 22.

"The conversation on the Hidden Valley Park site was driven primarily based on the fact that there was recognition we don't have enough money to build it, and we are falling further behind on the public safety," Pyle said. "So, the conversations that have taken place so far are: 'How much money do you have in the Public Safety Development Fund?' 'It's about $575,000.' 'And what's the appraised value of Hidden Valley Park?' '$1.45 million dollars.' 'Can you build a fire station for $2 million?' 'Yes, I can.' That has been the conversation."

Pyle also cited the reasoning behind the council's change to a new direction.

"The new council seated and recognized we don't have the money to build it, we don't have the money to maintain it and now we don't have the water to water it," he said.

What's New Since 2013

In 2013, the Council first took up the notion of selling the undeveloped parkland, but decided against the move after receiving overwhelming public opposition. Conditions, however, have changed. Measure S, a voter initiative that would have increased taxes to pay for construction of a new fire station, "is no longer in our future," Pyle said. "Without Measure S to help us out on the public safety side, we're looking for a whole different approach for how we're going to fund our public safety needs."

The drought has also worsened in the meantime, and the city is under state mandate to reduce its water consumption by 29 percent compared to 2013 usage, making development of park difficult, Pyle said. He's also faced questions from the council about how much the city has spent to keep the undeveloped land maintained.

"How much money have you spent on weed abatement since we've owned this thing?" Pyle said he was asked. "The number at the time was about $250,000 over the 40-some-odd years in weed abatement."

Back to School

The city may soon have a lot more open recreation area at its disposal. Pyle told the park and rec commissioners, he was in discussion with the city's school superintendents, working on a plan to make their schoolyards available for general use when the schools are not in session. That additional acreage would be added to the totals used to calculate whether Hanford is meeting its self-set obligation to maintain 2.2 acres of parkland for every 1,000 citizens. Talks, Pyle said, are just beginning, but the school districts leadership seems supportive.

"They are receptive to the idea of us actually gaining some substantial acreage in our parks and recreation open space portfolio," he said. "It's always been there, it's just been on the wrong side of the gate."

Pyle also said many residents near Hidden Valley Park no longer want to see the park developed, citing traffic concerns.

Petition Against Sale Gains Quick Support

Pyle was warned at the July 22 meeting, however, that should the council go ahead with the plan its members may face a severe backlash at the polls during the next elections. Public outcry began even sooner, as Robin Mattos of the Hanford Environmental Awareness Team delivered a petition against the sale bearing nearly 300 signatures. Also presented was data Mattos collected online, she believes go against the notion Hanford is meeting its acres of open land per residents requirement.

"You're being asked to make a finding that the current General Plan of 2002 is consistent with and would be OK to utilize as a reason to name 18.1 acres on the western portion of Hidden Valley Park as surplus land," she said. "But, I believe that in order to be able make a finding like that, not only does the General Plan need to determine that you're on the right road to figure that out, but also you need to determine, OK, we have a greater (amount of parkland) than what we need."

The numbers she discovered on the city's website, she said, say the city is below the 2.2-acre requirement.

"At this moment, you're not even at that minimum," she said.

The Latest Numbers

Mattos, however, may have been mislead by outdated information.

Darlene Mata, the city's director of Community Development, who was on hand at the August 11 planning meeting to request reaffirmation of the Commission's 2013 finding, said she used newer survey results to make her calculations.

"Based on the most recent calculations of acreage included in the background report we have a surplus," she told the planning commissioners. "So, we're hitting 2.2 acre per 1,000 when the standard is 2. It doesn't mean we can't have more. It means we do have more."

The issue became even more clouded when Commissioner Paden, using numbers from the background report that seemed to use the 18.1 acres of Hidden Valley Park under consideration for sale, found an apparent discrepancy during the meeting. Mata, calling the third estimate of parkland a coincidence, reassured the commissioners she had used the latest data and checked her math repeatedly.

"I used the current calculations," she said. "Without the 18 acres."

Park's Fate Still Uncertain

Without the planning commission's reaffirmation of the 2013 decision, the city council cannot go ahead with the sale.

"They have to have that finding to move forward," Mata said.

That, however, does not mean the issue is closed. Mata has already recalculated the acres-to-residents ratio and included space that had been overlooked previously. Not included were nearly 40 acres of a soccer park used and maintained by the city and a softball facility of which the city is joint owner. With that land taken into consideration, the city is now clearly well above the 2.2-acre requirement, Mata said, and the new data will be reported to the planning commission if they are asked a second time to reaffirm their 2013 decision.

The agenda for the Council's August 18 meeting did not include a discussion of Hidden Valley Park or any action on the issue.

The lower level of the Valley Voice building is for lease.
For more information, call Shari Aguirre at Zeeb Commercial Real Estate at 559-625-2128.

Address: 3350 S. Fairway, Visalia
Location: Fairway between Caldwell and Sunnyside (behind Joann's Fabrics and Bowling Alley)
Monthly Rate: $2,090.00
Price/Sq Ft: .80

Wells

Continued from p. 1

neighborhood was upset, but after six weeks they were "fed up." The trucks, sometimes two at a time, were arriving seven-days-a-week from, 6am to 9pm. Flores came to the TCBOS on June 23 to apprise the board of their plight.

Village Gardens is a poor community with no sidewalks and where adults walk for exercise and the kids play in the street. The community is two streets wide and has 510 residents. Ten private wells have already gone dry directly to the west of their community. Flores says that the situation in East Porterville is heartbreaking but it will not do any good if Village Gardens ends up in the same situation.

When nothing changed, Flores came to speak at the Tulare County Supervisors meeting again on July 28. Besides the wear and tear on their already pot-holed roads, he described how the tanker trucks create a safety hazard.

"Kids will be kids and we have just been lucky that no accidents have happened yet." Flores explained.

When school starts, he said, 60 kids will be at three bus stops throughout the community and in the path of the tankers. He asked the supervisor if the county could give the community a break.

"Would anyone on the board want all these trucks in and out of their neighborhood," Flores asked. He asked the county to find another source of water because tensions are high and the community's nerves are shot.

Tulare County Finding New Sources of Water

After Flores pleaded with the BOS, Lockman told the haulers to only use the system Monday through Friday, 7am to 5pm. But, he added, the reduced schedule has already impacted the operation and that Village Garden is already getting a 60 percent break from what the county is allowed to take.

"If we were to stop sending trucks in for a couple days a week, we'd have back to back trucks lined up there the other days, have to extend the hours into the early morning and late evening, and spend thousands more dollars a week of taxpayer money on their overtime. The end result would be that everyone, including them, would be more upset, so we're going to keep doing exactly what we're doing," said Lockman.

To alleviate the strain on Village Gardens and provide water to East Porterville, TCBOS just awarded a contract for the drilling of a new municipal well located near Olive Ave. and the Tule River. This well will be used to fill the temporary tanks and eventually will connect to the East Porterville homes. The well could be in operation and filling tanks by next year, but actually connecting to homes could be years away. The new well is part of a $2.6 million dollar project that is mostly paid for by state grants. Work will likely begin at the end of August.

Village Gardens Wells Go Down

Just two days after Flores spoke at the supervisors' meeting the Village Garden well went down on July 30. Three tankers had come and gone that morning and two more tankers were lined up when the well went down for three hours. Then, the well went down again eight days later on August 7 for two hours.

The reason for the well going down is where the story gets muddy. Lockman was told by the field services supervisor maintaining the system that it was vandalism and that the county's operations were in no way the cause. Flores, on the other hand, was told by Mike Knight, Porterville superintendent of services, that in both cases it was a blown fuse. Flores doubts the vandalism theory because the well is surrounded by an eight foot fence with a locked gate and the neighbors watch it. He also doubts that a resident would sabotage their own source of water. He believes the well went down because of overuse of the system.

Flores has been asking the board why Village Gardens is the only neighborhood that is providing water to the county tank program.

"What more has to happen before there is a change," Lockman asked in an email that the county has gotten agreements with four different water sources including Village Gardens. The county also has agreements to retrieve water at sources outside of the county, and they continue to pursue additional sources. In some instances they are hauling water from over two hours away

"We've been unable to get any water from over a dozen other sources we've pursued, because they have issues of their own," Lockman said.

"Bottom line, Village Gardens residents aren't happy, and they're afraid, but their system is solid and has not been impacted to legitimize their concerns. Anyone objectively evaluating the situation comes to the same conclusion," Lockman said.

Lockman's frustration is evident. Tulare County is ground zero for the state's drought and Lockman's job is to mitigate its effect. He manages the operation of finding sources of water and filling residential tanks, not only in East Porterville, but Monson-Sultana, Cutler-Orosi, Oakieville and anywhere else residential wells have gone dry. But the county's very best efforts may turn into a giant game of whack-a-mole, and the City of Porterville knows it.

"We asked the City of Porterville for water, they sent us there (Village Gardens), miles away from where we needed water, instead of letting us use a hydrant on the east side of town, because they are concerned about their system," Lockman said.

Flores said he believes if Porterville is concerned about their system, then it would stand to reason that Village Gardens should be concerned too. Village Gardens has a municipal supply well that is constructed to significantly higher standard than private domestic or agricultural wells. But so are Porterville's, and they actually built and operate Village Gardens' system. If there is nothing to be concerned about, then why can't the County Tank Program take water from the fire hydrant closest to the community of East Porterville?

Flores also pointed out that Village Gardens is a closed system. Once their well goes, 510 residents will be without water, with no recourse and no fire protection. If one of Porterville's wells goes dry, they have 34 or 35 other wells in their system.

Nevertheless, Lockman insists that "the Village Gardens system does not have the same concerns as the city's system and is much better off." But then he goes on to say later, "There's been talk of once we max out our local capacity, of having to bring water in by train from other parts of the state."

Cal Water Asking for 2017 Rate Increase

Dave Adalian

As if the drought weren't bad enough, water users in and around Visalia may soon be paying more at the tap.

California Water Service, in paperwork filed with the state's Public Utility Commission, is proposing a series of rate increases starting in 2017 that would see its customers paying $6.79 more each month by 2019.

"Understanding that any kind of rate increase is painful to customers, if the rate changes are approved, customers are still paying well under a penny a gallon," said Kevin McKusker, government and community relations assistant for Cal Water's Visalia office. "The average customer is paying $34 or $35 a month in the Visalia area. It's unfortunate that this rate increase coincides with the drought. I think there's a concern that we understand customers are already under a lot of pressure. We want the customers to understand this is a public process overseen by the Commission."

Infrastructure at Risk

The hikes are needed, Cal Water says, to pay for the replacement of aging infrastructure throughout its system, including 33,490 feet of water main -- more than six miles -- that are deemed at high risk of failure if they are not replaced soon.

"The main replacement is kind of spread over the whole district," McKusker said. "High-risk means these things have a lifespan. The good news is as you replace them, the materials get better. It's key to the company to reinvest this kind of money to benefit the customers. If we don't replace them, it puts the system at risk."

City to Have Its Say

Hammering out how the rates could change will be overseen by the CPUC in an 18-month process that includes input from customers and City Hall. McKusker said Cal Water has requested hearings on the rate changes be held in Visalia, thought that decision is the CPUC's to make. Cal Water representatives and city staff met to discuss the increases before and after the filing, which Cal Water is required by law to make every three years.

"We've indicated to the PUC we'll be weighing on their rate proposals," said Visalia City Councilman Greg Collins. "I think we're in our infancy. They've indicated they're just going through the process for rate increases, so we don't have any specifics at this time."

City Hall disputed the amount of the last rate increase Cal Water proposed, and some concessions were made. Whether that will be the case this time remains to be seen.

"We're in the wings in terms of reviewing and commenting," Collins said, "but obviously it sounds like there's nothing to comment on (to the CPUC) at this time."

Water Wars?

The city is, however, ready to fight the increases if necessary.

"Of course we're not happy about it," said Councilwoman Amy Shuklian. "That's the trouble with having a privately-owned utility servicing our city. We have no control over what they do or how they do it. We fought a long, hard battle a few years back. We were able to whittle it down a bit, but certainly it's not a good thing, especially when you're asking people to save, save, save, and your bill stays the same."

That frustration was part of the reason the city advocated for lesser increases last time, she said.

"We were able to get some compromises and concession with the commission," Shuklian said. "People are using less, thinking their bill will be less, and it's not."

Increases Start Big

While the proposed increases total $6.79 over three years, the request for 2017 is a $5.05 per month hike, followed by 80 cents in 2018 and 94 cents in 2019. This roll-out is a cost-saving measure, McKusker said, and comes at the request of the commission.

"That is at the direction of the PUC," he said. "Just like when you pay for things over time, so I'm using the mortgage kind of scenario as an analogy, as you spread the payments out, you actually increase the cost over time."

Public Input Welcome

This could be a sticking point, and Cal Water expects the city to have its say.

"We expect that (since) the City of Visalia has been an intervener in the past, we expect them to provide some input to the commission," McKusker said. "If it's a request to spread the increase out, that would be up to the Commission."

Citizens who wish to weigh in on the decision can send their comments directly to the CPUC. Instructions are available on its website, www.cpuc.ca.gov.

Payment Assistance Available

Options to reduce water bills are also available for low-income customers and for those experiencing short-term hardships.

"There is customer assistance available," McKusker said. "It's not difficult at all."

Details on cost-cutting programs are available at calwater.com. To qualify for the Low-Income Rate Assistance program, a household with only one or

Food Freedom Initiative Starts Gathering Signatures

The Food Freedom initiative has been officially filed and the Urban Farmers for Food Freedom has five months left to gather approximately 8,000 signatures to qualify for the June, 2016 ballot.

Fewer signatures are needed to get on the November ballot. The initiative would allow any "family household" to keep up to six chickens and four miniature goats. For more information on how the signature gathering process is going or if you want to help go to their website, improgoat.com.

— Catherine Doe

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS

The city attorney has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

AN INITIATIVE MEASURE TO PERMIT HOUSEHOLDS TO KEEP GOATS AND CHICKENS IN THE CITY OF VISALIA

The initiative would allow households within the City of Visalia to keep up to six chickens (no roosters), and up to four goats. Only goats that are Nigerian Dwarf or African Pygmy breeds would be allowed. Male goats over ten weeks of age would be required to be neutered.

The initiative would remove the existing prohibitions of chicken and goats in all areas of the City not zoned agricultural or rural residential.

The initiative would allow a "Family household", in any zone, to raise goats and chickens in compliance with the limitations in the initiative. There would be no limitations based on zoning, lot size, or type of residence. The initiative would apply to any Family household, whether in a single-family residence, multi-family or apartment unit, or in a mobile home park (The initiative uses the capitalized term "Family household" but does not define it; absent a provided definition, a common dictionary definition of "household" is: a family or other group that are living together in one living unit.) Existing and future private limitations on keeping of animals, such as landlord rules, mobile home park rules, or neighborhood covenants or CC&Rs, would still apply and would be privately enforceable.

The initiative requires at least ten square feet of permeable land area for each chicken, and at least one hundred square feet of permeable land area per goat. Setback requirements currently applicable in rural residential zones for housing poultry or raising goats would be negated, and replaced with the above "permeable land" requirements in the initiative, which would be applicable in all zones.

The measure requires shelter and fencing adequate to protect the animals from the elements, to prevent predator access, and to keep the animals from escaping.

Under the initiative, the permitted number of goats and chickens would not be counted against the combination of four dogs or cats allowed per household without obtaining a separate kennel permit.

The proposed measure does not require a license or permit for goats or chickens, and does not contain any vaccination requirements. The measure does not include any specific noise or odor regulations.

The initiative does not modify existing municipal code ordinances prohibiting public nuisances, or broader prohibition against keeping animals in foul or offensive conditions. The initiative also does not modify existing ordinances requiring owners and occupants of property to maintain their property. The initiative also does not impact existing municipal ordinances concerning disturbing or unreasonable noise. However, determining whether the keeping of chickens or goats in a particular instance violates these general ordinances because of offensive noise or odors experienced by neighboring properties would require a judgment determination.

Building and zoning ordinances are also not altered by the initiative. If structures are required to be added to meet the initiative requirements, they would need to be built in compliance with applicable building and zoning requirements.

Certification

This title and summary, containing 493 words, are hereby submitted in conformance with California Elections Code section 9203.

Alex Peltzer, City Attorney

Dated: 7/20/2015

NOTICE OF INTENT TO CIRCULATE PETITION

Notice is hereby given by the persons whose names appear hereon of their intention to circulate the petition within the City of Visalia for the purpose of amending the Visalia Municipal Code to permit households to keep goats and chickens in the City of Visalia. A statement of the reasons of the proposed action as contemplated in the petition is as follows:

Family Food Freedom Act

We need to lead the way in enhancing the rights of families to engage in urban farming. In this rich agricultural breadbasket to the world, we should be protecting family rights to food freedom.

Our rights are being undermined by government officials that think they know better than we do how we should live our lives and care for our children.

Restoring the rights of Families to keep and raise Food Producing Animals will protect personal property rights and allow Families the freedom to provide for their individual nutritional needs and those of their children.

With the rapid increase of government control from the local to the federal level, we want less government intrusion in our backyards and in our homes.

This initiative will put the needs of families first and reestablish the basic human right of food freedom and independence.

We believe that families should have the option to own food producing animals on their private property, whether for financial, health, environmental or food safety and security reasons.

This initiative will change the top down type of government that is currently in place within our City.

If this initiative is signed by at least 15 percent of the voters of the City, it is requested that the proposed measure be submitted immediately to a vote of the people at a special election, or if less than 15 percent of the voters of the City, at the next regular municipal election for which it qualifies.

s/ Gingi Freeman

s/ Mike McCarthy

s/ Susan Walsh

No Warning for Road Hazard

Rose Shapley
Special to the *Valley Voice*

In Kings County about 18' of pavement has been cut and removed from an abandoned (still used by the public) portion of the old hwy 41 near the intersection of Hwy 33 and Hwy 41. It appears on old 2013 Google Maps and Street View and as far as I know it is still a hazard and still has no warning. I alerted authorities when I discovered it in May. I was shocked and appalled that so much work could be done but no warning would be installed to say "road closed" or "pavement ends" or "ditch" or "stop" no signage at all!!!

Driving the connecting miles of highway between 99, I 5 and 101 has gotten better over the years but many portions have not improved much since the 1980's. Called "blood alley" for a reason. This abandoned portion if maintained would provide several miles of two lanes going each way rather than one head on with another.

The sign saying "Now Open" could be moved to a location that was not encouraging use of the gravel road connecting the abandoned portion of hwy 41 and hwy 33. I have seen vehicles on the roads, but did not notice the turn out they use to avoid the 18' ditch where the pavement has been removed, asphalt cut creates a ledge that causes blow outs.

I have seen two trailer trucks hauling produce on the gravel road. So it is a really good gravel road!

Cal Trans, CHP, Kings County Public Works and The Eagle Feather Market all know of the road hazard. Still nothing has been done and we have another holiday coming, Labor Day. Another fog season will be here soon enough. I was told not to do anything as it must be engineered so it will be a safe correction.

I still have nightmares that people hit it and do not survive. Driving with damage and bad alignment, later going off the road and nobody knows the cause. I feel lucky to be alive to complain about it. I am new here so Valley Voice may have reported on this or know why it is not being fixed, sorry if I missed your report on this please fill me in.

I find your paper and read it whenever I can. I live in Hanford and can pick it up at the Vets Hall most of the time. Some issues are not found there and I have to look other places. It gets difficult to find sometimes, always worth looking for and reading.

I think many more people would drive between the valley (Tulare, Kern, Kings and Fresno) and coast (SLO County) if the route was safer. It is a scary road to drive especially during the fog season. Not many resources to help in the event of an emergency. Feels like you are in the middle of nowhere because you kind of are. Near Kettleman Hills infamous for the toxic case that paid out $335,000,000 in 2006.

I am so glad 198 has been made safer between Visalia and Hanford. It is so much better driving since it was improved, especially when fog is threatening. I feel much safer when the head on traffic has its own lanes further away. Folks can pass safely.

Thanks for your ongoing dedication to reporting in the Valley.

An abandoned portion of the old Hwy. 41 near the intersection of Hwys. 33 and 41.

Briefly...

WEST HILLS COLLEGE NAMES THREE FINALISTS FOR LEMOORE PRESIDENT POSITION

The search for a new college president for West Hills College Lemoore has been narrowed down to three well qualified educators, one from California, one from Oregon, and one from Texas.

The three were selected to move forward after nine finalists were interviewed by a presidential search committee made up of 14 college and district administrators, staff and faculty from Lemoore and the district, and two members of the West Hills Community College District Board of Trustees. Board members on the committee were Len Falter of Lemoore and Nina Oxborrow of Coalinga.

The national search yielded 43 applicants to fill the seat of retiring President Don Warkentin, who leaves the college late this fall after a career that covers 29 years as a campus administrator, beginning in 1986.

The finalists:

Dr. Jeremy Brown, former president, Portland Community College in Oregon; Dr. Kristin Clark, vice president, student services, Orange Coast College in California; and Dr. Chemene Crawford, vice president, student services, El Centro College in Texas.

The search committee held personal interviews on Aug. 5 and 6 with the top nine candidates. Three were selected to come back to Lemoore on Sept. 10 for a public forum on campus to meet faculty, staff and members of the community. The three will get a second interview the next day, Sept. 11 with Chancellor Frank Gornick, who will then recommend one individual to become only the third president of WHCL in its 14-year history. That recommendation will go to the Board of Trustees for approval at its regular meeting on Sept. 22, which will be held at the Lemoore campus.

WHCCD Chancellor Frank Gornick said the three candidates will be on campus for the September forums for one or more public events throughout the day, at times to be announced later.

West Hills College Lemoore is one of two colleges comprising the West Hills Community College District, which covers 3,400 square miles in parts of Kings, Fresno, Monterey, San Benito and Madera Counties.

SEE TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY IN VISALIA TEEN IDOL

VISALIA, CA – Gracing the stage of the L.J. Williams Theater, tomorrow's top teen stars will face a panel of celebrity judges to compete for the title of Visalia Teen Idol 2015 and you're invited!

After a rigorous audition process, 10 Visalia teens were chosen to compete in this year's competition. The City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department invites the community to come on out and support local talent in this signature event that is great for the whole family.

The celebrity panel, representing professionals from the fields of music and entertainment, will judge performers as they take the stage. It's this celebrity panel that will ultimately decide who will be the Visalia Teen Idol of 2015. Will your pick win big? With a special appearance by Casandra Castaneda, Visalia Teen Idol 2014, the night is local entertainment at its finest.

Visalia Teen Idol offers teens a healthy outlet to showcase their talents, skills and abilities. Opportunities are now available to local businesses or organizations who would like to support the event through sponsorship.

Tickets are on sale now at the Visalia Parks & Recreation Business Office, located inside the Anthony Community Center. For more information on Visalia Teen Idol, call 559-713-IDOL, email recrea-tion@visalia.city or visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com. Visalia Teen Idol is not associated with Fox Broadcasting's American Idol, 19 TV Limited or & Fremantle Media Enterprises.

As the competition nears, we'll be showcasing contestants on Instagram @VisaliaParks. Use #visaliateenidol and join the conversation.

DETAILS

WHAT: Visalia Teen Idol

WHEN: Saturday, September 19, 2015. Doors open at 5 p.m., show starts at 6 p.m.

WHERE: LJ Williams Theater, 1001 W. Main St. Visalia, CA 93291

COST: $7 pre-sale, $10 at the door

RETHINK YOUR DRINK EVENT PLANNED FOR WOODLAKE

Community members can expect free music, children's games, raffles, a Bailoterapia class, and more at the Rethink Your Drink event to be held in Woodlake on Wednesday, August 26, from 6-8:00 pm.

The Rethink Your Drink events primary goals are to educate the community about healthy drink options, help identify drinks with added sugar, and make the link between consumption of sugary-sweetened drinks and health risks.

Presented by the Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Program, the event will be held at Miller Brown Park at the corner of Magnolia St. and Antelope Ave.

Through community events such as Rethink Your Drink, NEOP wants to help communities learn the health benefits of drinking water and being physically active.

For more information contact Hernan Hernandez, 559-685-5739.

INAUGURAL CAR SHOW AT WEST HILLS COLLEGE COALINGA TO RAISE FUNDS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

West Hills College Coalinga will host a car show on Sept. 12 on its campus to support the President's Scholars Program. The scholarship program provides free tuition and $250 per semester for books to students at WHCC, West Hills College Lemoore and the North District Center in Firebaugh who receive the scholarship.

Registration for the event, which will feature and welcome street rods, hot rods, low riders, stock and modified cars and pick-ups, is $25 and will remain open up until the day of the show.

"There are a number of car enthusiasts in our area and I discussed this idea for a car show with the Chief Judge of the Sports Car Club of America, who lives in Coalinga, and he was interested in helping out," said Ken Stoppenbrink, Deputy Chancellor of the West Hills Community College District and one of the show's organizers. "This also helps showcase the college and brings other revenue sources into the community for the day."

Admission for spectators is free and food and beverages will be available. The cars will be displayed along Elm Street in front of the athletic field.

Pre-register online at westhillscollege.com/carshow. For more information about the event, contact Butch Wright at 559-935-3327 or at 59otsjag@gmail.com.

Set up for the event will begin at 6 a.m. and judging will start at 10 a.m. at the Coalinga campus at 300 Cherry Lane in Coalinga.

WHCL CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACADEMY OFFERS FAST TRACK TO COMPUTER PROGRAMMING JOBS

A new Career Technical Education (CTE) Academy at West Hills College Lemoore will soon allow students interested in a computer programming career to become job-ready in less than a year.

Starting Sept. 1, WHCL will offer an intensive, two semester long computer coding and programming course as part of a series of CTE academies focused on preparing students for jobs.

For more information about this academy, visit westhillscollege.com/lemoore or contact David-Michael Rengh at (559) 925-3655 or davidrengh@whccd.edu.

Viewpoint

Why The One Voice Initiative Matters

Terri Rufert

As the Superintendent for Sundale Union Elementary School District in Tulare, my goal has always been to provide students with every possible opportunity to reach their potential and prepare them for the future. That is why I am actively supporting the One Voice for Students initiative, spearheaded by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), which means so much to California's six million public school students.

ACSA's top priority to advocating for students and our initiative focuses on three specific areas: improving student outcomes, creating human resource processes that support meeting the needs of all students and creating a stable and sufficient funding system that enables all students to meet California's high standards.

Our first concentration centers on California's accountability system, Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards, high school exit exams, as well as digital instruction materials. The 2015-16 state budget includes funding for mandate repayment for K-12, which can be used at the discretion of local school districts.

At Sundale, we plan to use this funding to upgrade our online infrastructure, purchase and implement software supporting Common Core, strengthen our science, technology, engineering and math curriculum, as well as training for the principal and staff in science and technology.

The next step is creating a dedicated source that doesn't rely on taxes. A dedicated source won't force districts to make tough choices during a budget crunch that could have a negative impact on our students. To properly invest in changing standards, strengthening curriculum and providing training, we must create that solid source.

The second goal focuses on educator effectiveness and funding professional development. ACSA is pro-teacher and believes every student deserves an education built on an effective teacher and effective principal. ACSA believes the state's strongest educators are harmed by ineffective colleagues. We value the important work happening in our public school classrooms and believe the rights of students should always be paramount to the work we're doing.

California must endeavor to have a strong evaluation system that focuses primarily on student achievement. We should strive to create a system ensuring continuous improvement for all educators.

Regarding our funding system, our goal is to work toward a common definition of adequacy. What does it really take to run a quality school/program? We, as Californian's, expect our schools to help students grow and learn in order to fill the current and future needs for the workforce and society. An issue is our standing in the United States, with California currently ranked 46th in per pupil spending. Expectations and funding need to be more aligned.

Increased state revenues are a positive because those revenues will feed more money to schools and to our students. However the new school district budget cap could have a very negative impact during a budget crunch. That is why ACSA is pushing for a cap repeal.

The budget cap restricts most districts to a reserve of 6-8 percent of our general fund. This is only 2-3 weeks of cash flow, which restricts districts and board members the flexibility to put money aside for facility maintenance, construction, retiree benefits textbooks and materials. It does provide for a greater risk of insolvency, negative credit rating and cash flow issues.

A cap at Sundale would deplete the deferred maintenance fund and pension benefit fund for retirees, as well as force the district to let go of staff and close extracurricular programs in order to have the fund staff salaries and pay our regular bills to keep the doors open. It's the students who lose out. The issue of how funds are used and, or saved needs to be a local issue, not a state issue. Once again, students' education rights must be met.

ACSA's One Voice for Students Initiative is a multi-year endeavor that school leaders have committed to in order to speak with one voice on the three topics listed above. The children really are our future and they deserve our very best.

How We Teach Violence to Children

David Soleil

As thoughtful, caring parents, we would never want to teach our kids that violence is the answer to any or every problem. We want our children to learn to get along with others, share, be kind, say "excuse me," and try their best at an empathetic, "I'm sorry."

I thought I was attuned to the violence that surrounds us in American culture. However, a trip to our local department store with my kids yesterday was shocking. We stepped into the toy aisles.

Every toy, without exception, uses violence and weapons to cause pain and/or death as their solution to problems. Then, with the Horror Series, we are supposed to play Serial Killer? Seriously?

What message does this send our children? Violence is heroic. Violence is the solution to all problems. Violence is a super power.

We are aghast and outraged when we see ISIS beheading a person on the nightly news, yet our children play out the same gruesome scenarios with the toys we get them for their birthday, the movies we take them to see, the comic books we buy for them, the shows they watch on TV, and the video games we buy for them.

What is a solution for this? Do I want a Selma action figure series at Target? Perhaps a Gandhi bobble-head? (Yes, that one exists...)

While that would be nice, the solution that I seek is to empower parents to take a stand for your values. Take a stand for peace-making.

Take a stand for selfless service to others, out of compassion and empathy. Your children are looking to you to define how to interact with the world. Talk with them about your values, especially at Target, and especially in the toy aisle. How do you solve problems? Connect it to your faith or your belief system.

What does it mean to you to be a Christian? A Muslim? A Unitarian Universalist? A Humanitarian? Who are the super heroes in your life and why?

Suddenly, those plastic "super heroes" and weapons seem pretty silly and your family's connections, values and relationships have grown much deeper. Stand strong. Put peace into their hands. Leave the violence on the shelf.

The Achilles Heel

Ron Collins

Water is the Achilles Heel of California.

Every decision we make, be it business or personal life, depends on this water. What would happen if there was another drought year and no water to replenish the reservoirs? This State would be declared an emergency and disaster zone.

Well drillers would be "flooding" into the state, emergency permits for them would be issued, there would be a call nation-wide for plumbers redoing piping to pump stations in every water district to infuse with those new wells. This new action may hasten the inevitable migration of business and population out of the state.

Environmentalists would take a big hit in blame for having produced legal mandates for water releases that have denied more water to farms and cities. Politicians would be helpless knowing they had not legislated early for more water storage that could have shored up greater water volume three years ago. The mandate for Folsom Dam is to release down to 58 percent by each spring because Folsom Lake is not considered storage, it's flood relief. The public will have realized by then that storage level adjustments have not changed from paralysis foisted by the Endangered Species Act mandating water release. The Achilles Heel asserts itself in the form of the hidden wolf, and Californians haven't had the will to kill the beast before it devours hope.

In the midst of this morass steps in the Federal Government and declares California a National Disaster, providing the State of California massive loans and quick-step environmental reviews and emergency action whether it be train loads of water filled containers, much like the way oil is transported, or caravans of water tanks trucked from all over the US.

Attempts will be made to construct gravity disbursement water towers for water in towns and hamlets across the state, to be filled by water trucks for the purpose of population safety and survival. Fires will continue to burn and the will to fight them all will be less in the forest, but, populations centers will continue to be a protection priority. People belonging to sport clubs will flock to them for their showers. The clubs will be allocated extra water rates to encourage this activity.

Recycled waste water will be distributed by allocated tankers to keep city trees alive. Dust may accumulate as in the Sudan. Farmers will be instructed to leave fields fallow so less dust will be airborne. Housing construction will halt, except for apartment buildings that the disaffected will flock toward. Housing prices will plunge again as population decreases, putting less pressure on price increases.

California farming will slow its world market production, only the minimum water for stabilizing the local food sources will be allowed. Freedoms will be altered in travel and entertainment, with a real possibility of a tourist decline. The population birthrate is affected by then, fewer births mean an impact on educational systems with the resulting and commensurate declining income statewide.

All this may happen without rain, when the Achilles heel, becomes a wolf.

Gandhi and The Bomb

Stephanie Van Hook

It's an amazing contrast that the 20th century witnessed moments where nonviolence soared to giddying heights and violence brought us down to unfathomed lows.

When Gandhi heard the news that the United States had used the atomic bomb in Japan, he said that he sat still and silent. In his words: "I did not move a muscle when I first heard that the atom bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to myself 'unless now the world adopts nonviolence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.'"

When asked if it exploded his faith in nonviolence, he said that such a faith was the only thing that the atom bomb could not destroy. Moved as he was, he reminded us that though he has said it before, we absolutely must draw a moral from the use of the atom bomb: counter-bombs cannot destroy the sorrow and shame it caused, only love can do that.

Concretely, he advocated the bold move of states disarming themselves, noting that the courage required for such an act in a climate of violence would be enormous, but that the nation who could do it would catalyze a transformational shift in our world. But he is presupposing a deeper understanding of who we are, a faith in ourselves that makes that courage real and available to us.

My mentor, drawing on the best in Gandhi's message, would not fail to point out that if we are called to disarm and resist such weaponry, we must, by all means available, raise the human image. It is not a psychological coincidence that the bombs were given human names, "Little Boy" and "Fat Man," while the people of Japan were not seen as people at all. Such dehumanization, such a low image of the human being, is the natural outcome of aggressive, destructive and deadly violence. And Gandhi nudges us, "is this not the futility of all violence?"

Taken to its logical end, we have to have faith that it is so, and carry with us the people of Japan in our hearts, never forgetting, never letting this happen to anyone ever again. Nonviolence is the only way.

Columns & Letters

Send us your Letters to the Editor
3350 S. Fairway Street, Visalia, CA 932777
By email: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Make Officers Agents of Care, Not Mean

Bill Huott

When an Officer is called to confront one of these people sleeping on the street especially overnight. "You can't be here." The answer back, by this crowd, it seems to me, is," Okay, where do want me to go?" We, the City, need to be able to give the Officer a better answer than...That's not my problem or just get out of sight so I don't get any more calls or leave town.

Here is what I have said for years, homelessness is not the right word..... Free Rent Camper is more correct. These people do not want a home. I have talked to them. A home requires rules. They do not follow any rules but their own. We need a place overnight where the Officer can tell them," you can't stay here but you can go to the city overnight sleeping area, it's located at the old lumber yard at Garden and Oak. There are also other services there." That is a City who gives a damn about people and their welfare even when they are off mentally, or are substance abusers or any other reason they want to "free rent camp" and not seek services like the Rescue Mission. They will not go there.

Currently, the message we tell this crowd, is we don't care, figure it out on your own, good luck, out of sight - out of mind. Pathetic, which is exactly what the DOJ ruling is saying.

"When adequate shelter space exists, individuals have a choice about whether or not to sleep in public. However, when adequate shelter space does not exist, there is no meaningful distinction between the status of being homeless and the conduct of sleeping in public. Sleeping is a life-sustaining activity — i.e., it must occur at some time in some place. If a person literally has nowhere else to go, then enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance against that person criminalizes her for being homeless."

At this designated location, all these homeless advocates, volunteers could provide services for all sorts of issues this entire crowd needs. We could deal with them so we could pick them off for help one by one, one at a time to be saved from this lifestyle. This would only be a location open overnight, open at 8pm, evacuated by 6am, no food, NO PERMANENT STRUCTURES, everything set up and taken down every night. TOILETS!

You would empower the Officer as an agent of Care not currently as, from their point of view, as an Agent of Mean.

Congressional Candidate Parra Speaks to South County Democrats

Staff Reports

The South County Democrats of Tulare conducted its first meeting on Wed., Aug. 12 which featured 21st Congressional Candidate Daniel Parra of Fowler. Parra will be running against two time winner Rep. David Valadao of Hanford.

The new Democratic organization is lead by interim officers: Jose Sigala, president; Sesar Carreno, vice president; Jack Gonzalez, rreasurer; and Grace Calderon, secretary. An agenda was introduced by the interim set of officers for the up coming year which outlined the organization's mission. A discussion on developing campaigns was held.

Parra spoke about growing up as a farm worker and remember those that helped him along the way and now he wants to help others in return. The 21st district includes the south county area of Tulare County.

The group is open to all Democrats specifically to those in Tulare and south to the county line; Earlimart, Tipton, Pixley and other rural areas. The South County Democratic Club is the only county-sanctioned Democratic club in Tulare.

Next meeting will be Sept. 9. Location to be announced.

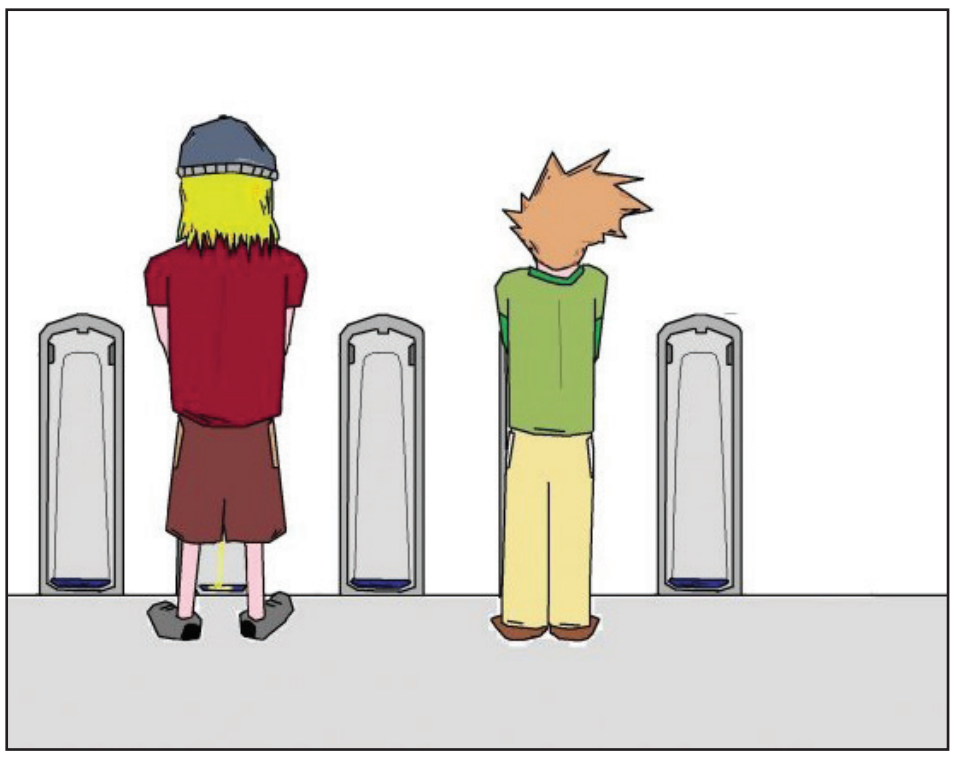
Parra officially announced his candidacy for Congressional district 21in April of this year. He was elected to the Fowler City Council in 2008 and is currently the mayor pro-tem. He also ran in 2014 for Fresno County Supervisor District losing by 25 points.

Parra grew up in Parlier with his six siblings and in 1985 enlisted in the United States Air Force. Parra has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, a Master's Degree in Public Administration from National University and a certificate in State and Local Government from Harvard's Kennedy School of Business. He has been married to his high school sweetheart for almost 30 years and they have two children. Parra has worked as a computer systems analyst at Northrop Grumman's NAS Lemoore facility for over 20 years.

Although the Democrats have a 16 point registration advantage over the Republicans in the 21st congressional district it doesn't seem to matter. Rep. Valadao trounced a lackluster John Hernandez in 2012, but he also beat the vibrant, Amanda Renteria by about the same amount in the 2014 elections, which was 15%. Even so, Democrats are still hoping to see a strong Hispanic turnout for the California Senate race and for the presidential election in 2016.

Black Tie

Alex Oldenbourg



"Dude, how come no one's told my bladder there's a drought?"

Veteran's Corner

Retired Military Appreciation Day at NAS Lemoore

Joe Wright

Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore is hosting its annual Retired Military Appreciation Day on Saturday, September 12 from 9am to 1pm, starting at the base theater. The purpose of the event is to provide updates covering benefits for military retirees and their spouses.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office, along with representatives from the Naval Hospital, Tri-Care, Social Security, Delta Dental, CALVET, California Telephone Access, Navy Gold Star, and others will be providing valuable information and will be available to answer questions from event participants.

All retired military, spouses and widows/widowers are invited to attend. For more information call the Fleet and Family Support Center at (559) 998-4042. To obtain access to NAS Lemoore, it is important to have a current ID card. The Personnel Support Detachment will be open from 0900-1300 to assist with new ID card needs.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

"As someone who loves the hobby of disc golf, and who professionally educates the public on threats to the natural world, let me see if I can help.

If you believe that disc golf is in the same league, sport, sentence, or universe as many other things humans do, that negatively affect nature, you need a very serious education. That isn't an attack, just a fact. The trees you showed pictures of, those are not disc impacts, discs cannot transfer as much force as is needed to cause those dents, not even with years of hits. Disc golfers love the nature aspect of playing. At my local course we work with the parks to establish the areas that need to be protected to keep the wildlife habitat stable. Stable enough to support all the native species, including the hawks and owls. (Raptors are usually the first species to leave an unhealthy environment) Not once have we had problems with the disc community not supporting these initiatives. We love the natural look of our parks. So why then did you attack us over ball golf? Living in California, I would have assumed you were aware of the water shortage? Have you compared the water used for ball golf courses and disc golf courses. I'll give you a hint, water usage for disc golf = amount of water players drink. That's just about it.

You want to see a real change in your community? Do you want to write a real article worthy of recognition? How about an article on how far solar power has come on the last decade, what it's practical applications are now and in the future, and finish with an inspiring voice centered around how California could be a leader in clean energy with its use. We'll even help you edit it. Clean energy would help the world around you, including the oak trees. Oak trees much prefer rainfall over the concern of a small piece of plastic weighed in grams."

— ***Zach the Biologist,*** *on* ***Disc Golf: Not Your Father's Frisbee Game***

Marge Ressler

Vice President and Business Banking Officer,
Visalia Business Banking Center

Veronica Lopez

Vice President and Business Banking Officer,
Visalia Business Banking Center

VALLEY BUSINESS BANK

Your Success Is Our Business

VISALIA | FRESNO | TULARE | WOODLAKE

Member FDIC www.valleybusinessbank.net EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Valley Voice
Valley Scene
20 August, 2015

Artistic Bird Houses on Display at Porterville Art Association

Nancy Vigran

Bird houses are being featured at the current Porterville Art Association show through mid-September. Lifelong artist Dave Griswold, began architecting and constructing bird houses close to 10 years ago.

A life-long artist, Griswold, is a former high school art instructor. He has lived in Tulare County for the past 30 years.

"I never really liked to work with wood," he said.

But, that changed when he saw some old barn wood.

"I didn't know what I was going to do with it," he said, but he knew he had to have it.

Although not really a bird watcher, he decided on bird houses, or really bird feeders.

"Like many an old farmer, the texture of their lives is like the texture of the wood I recycle," he said.

"Each exterior board from each building I have dismantled tells a story of purpose and struggle as well as wear from an environment not always compliant with the wishes of the new steward."

Griswold's bird feeders are designed to be functional as well as artistic.

"Each piece is constructed from wood I have dismantled from a farm structure," he said. "Most of the wood I use is near 100 years old or older."

Most of the detail in his work is from this old wood, which he said is easy to work with because it is heart redwood and there are no white strands or sapwood and therefore has no rotting. Griswold does use a marine grain plywood base on his houses and uses some new brass parts.

Some other bird houses created by Griswold were made from an old ice house which had been built in 1932. A piece of the wood has Lemoore Lumber, 1932 hand written on it.

It takes him approximately three to four weeks to finish one house. He works on his houses in the spring, summer and fall, as he works outside. He occasionally will sketch out a piece before he starts to build, but mostly lets the wood determine the structure.

While he first started by building two-dimensional houses, which often resembled old barns, he had a customer ask for something with a Japanese style. That one house interested him so much, that Griswold now often designs in an Oriental theme.

Local artist Dave Griswold shows off some of the bird houses he has designed and built. Photo courtesy Dave Griswold.

Griswold donates his work to the Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County Bird House auction each year, as well as a few other non-profit groups.

All of Griswold's bird houses on display are available for purchase. Prices range from $125-250 for the smaller

BIRDHOUSES continued on **19 »**

Young Artists Show Their Work at Brandon-Mitchell Gallery

Donna Orosco

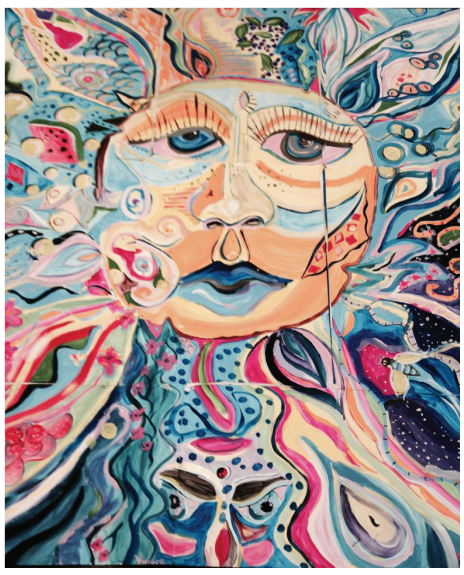
Two young eclectic artists will show their work at the Brandon-Mitchell Gallery in the Center for Spiritual Living (formerly the Spiritual Awareness Center) in September and October. A reception for the artists is part of the First Friday art walk on September 4 from 5:30-8 pm.

Michele Edith Brady/Michele Angelica Mandala

Michele Brady/Michele Angelica Mandala has been drawing since the age of two. She felt inspired by her grandmother, Edith, although she never met her. She especially liked looking at her paintings of wood grains in different and bright colors. She also liked her abstracts.

In 2005, Mandala discovered Spontaneous Expression Workshops by Michele Cassou through Holy Names University's Sophia Program. She took 10 years of this style of painting and combined it with traditional painting in her time at Cal State University East Bay for her BA in Art. In 2011, she received a Master's degree in Spirituality and World Culture from HNU and The Sophia Program, but her thesis focused on the content of the Spontaneous Expression Painting Workshops.

Over the years Mandala has used various mediums, including soft pastel, colored pencil, regular pencil, conte, colored ink, and acrylic and oil paint, as well as water color.



Michele's art

"My art is guided by the heart of God for my personal healing that I will share with others as I heal to aid in their freedom and healing."

Mandala's other art expression is dance. She is training to become a professional belly dancer and will give a demonstration of her dance at the September 4 artist reception.

Jane Gehrke

Jane Gehrke has been interested in art since she was a little girl. Her mother, Pam, remembers Gehrke's preschool teacher showing her a picture drawn by her daughter and said how amazing it was for such a young child.

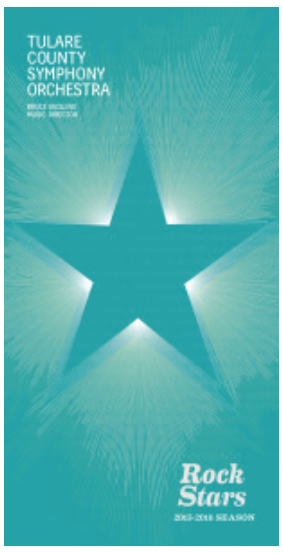
Gehrke found her passion for painting while attending art classes at community college and then received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and drawing at California College of the

ARTISTS continued on **19 »**

Tickets On Sale for Tulare County Symphony 2015-16 Season

Donna Orosco

The 2015-16 Tulare County Symphony season begins in September and is entitled "Rock Stars." Most people may not think of symphonic music as "rock," but music director Bruce Kiesling is quick to tell you that Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff and Rimsky-Korsakov were the rock stars of their day.



And, of course, John Williams is certainly a more modern rock star. His music will be featured in the annual movie theme concert in February.

The season kicks off, as always, with the Pops Concert in the Park. But this year for the first time, there is a choice of attending the concert at the Oval Park in Visalia on Friday, Sept. 11 or on Saturday, Sept. 12 at Zumwalt Park in Tulare.

Visalia has held several events in Oval Park as part of its effort to clean up the park and make it more accessible. Thanks to a Visalia City arts grant, the Visalia Rescue Mission is hosting the Pops at the Oval.

Some favorite guest soloists will return this season—starting with singer Rosalinda Verde at the Pops and Hope Garcia at the Holiday Concert. Also returning are violinist Danielle Belen and pianist Andrew Tyson.

New this year is singer Steven Braswell, who portrayed Jesus in this summer's League of Christian Actors' production of "Godspell." He will sing at the Pops. Another new face is the expressive Caitlin McKechney, who will sing folk tunes from "The Three-Cornered Hat" at the October concert.

The March concert will feature the symphony's own players as soloists--concertmaster Susan Doering, principal trumpet Cooper Walden and marimba player Michael Downing. It will be topped off with a favorite Tchaikovsky piece, Symphony No. 5.

The movie concert is usually a sell-out. This year, music from adventure films will be spotlighted. And the season ends with the original "cliffhanger" musical story of "Scheherazade," about the sultan who marries a woman at night and kills her the next morning. His latest wife, Scherherazade, comes up with a story each night that leaves him hanging and wanting to hear the next episode the next night, thus saving her life.

Various season packages are on sale at the symphony office. Season tickets range from $140 to $260, a 10 percent savings over individual prices. Students with ID pay just $10 per concert.

For more information, go to www.tularecountysymphony.com or call 732-8600.

Education

West Hills Wins Grants to Support At-Risk Students

The West Hills Community College District and West Hills College Coalinga recently received two grants from the United States Department of Education which will help serve students.

West Hills College Coalinga was awarded a five-year grant for its Student Support Services Program (SSS) while the West Hills Community College District earned a five-year grant for its district-wide High School Equivalency Program (HEP). The SSS grant will provide $270,961 annually to the program while the HEP grant will provide $475,000 annually for HEP related services.

The SSS program has been offered at WHCC for more than 15 years and provides academic and other support services to low-income, first generation or disabled students and aims to increase the graduation and transfer rates of these students through tutoring, peer mentoring, seminars and workshops, career exploration, college visits and advising. The funding will help provide these services to more than 200 students per year.

"These grants are so important because, as much as anything, they will help ensure that these high-risk students succeed in college," said Anita Wright, director of grants for the West Hills Community College District.

"This funding is crucial because it will allow us to continue to assist our students in reaching their academic goals and supporting the mission and goals of West Hills College Coalinga," WHCC Director of Title IV Programs Raquel Rodriguez said.

The High School Equivalency Program is an educational program that serves students from migrant or seasonal farmworker families in the Coalinga, Lemoore and Firebaugh areas. HEP helps students from these families who have dropped out of high school get their High School Equivalency (HSE) credential and serves more than 6,000 students nationwide annually. The grant will assist up to 100 qualifying students.

"Just look at where we are," said Javier Cazares, coordinator of Special Grants. "California has a large population of migrant and seasonal farmworkers that is generally underserved. The HEP grant will help provide resources and services intended specifically to assist students from these families."

"The Great Conversation" at COS

College of the Sequoias' "Great Conversation" discussion group is being organized to read and discuss some of the great classics of literature and philosophy published by the Great Books Foundation.

The readings include excerpts or complete works by writers such as Ibsen, Freud, Poincairé, Conrad, and Jung. The fall semester reading group will begin Monday, August 24, 2015. The group will meet every second and fourth Monday afternoon of the month from 4:00-5:30 PM on the COS main campus. The book costs $24.95 through the Great Books Foundation. Contact Dr. Joseph Teller at josepht@cos.edu or at (559) 730-3924 for further information about the meeting location, the book purchase, and the first reading under discussion.

Open to all readers interested in great books, Great Conversation discussion groups are not lecture-based, but instead use a process of "shared inquiry." While each discussion is led by an experienced seminar leader, discussions begin with open-ended, interpretive questions, and participants put forward their own interpretations, developing their views through the sharing of their ideas with others.

Students checking a soil profile on campus for root development on the top and sub soil layers.

COS Offers Class on Low-Water Gardening

With restrictions on watering and family budgets spread thin, Fernando Fernandez, College of the Sequoias (COS) Ornamental Horticulture faculty member, is offering a Xeriscape: Water Conservation course this fall on cost-effective, low-water techniques to beautify outdoor spaces. Xeriscape is a set of landscaping principles to design and maintain attractive landscaping while minimizing water use, ideal for combating the water restrictions faced by residents because of the California drought, explained Fernandez.

"Your garden is an extension of your indoor space," said Fernandez. "You can enjoy your yard more by applying Xeriscape techniques. People are often surprised that there are hundreds of attractive plants, way beyond cactus, that don't require much water."

Homeowners, landscapers, property managers and horticulture students would benefit from the Xeriscape class that combines lecture and hands-on labs.

It is offered on Monday and Wednesday from 1:10 to 3 PM starting August 17 through December 17 at the Tulare College Center campus in Tulare.

You can apply and register for the class online; there are no prerequisites or assessments required. Find the Xeriscape: Water Conservation (OH-218) under Ornamental Horticulture.

The Ornamental Horticulture course will cover practical material that students can apply immediately at home.

"Students learn how to conduct a water audit," said Fernandez. "This opens their eyes to how much water is wasted. They learn how to repair and adjust their system to maximize conservation and more easily comply with water restrictions imposed due to the drought."

According to Fernandez, houses can increase in value up to 25% with attractive, low maintenance landscaping that tolerates minimal watering. "Techniques such as properly amending the soil when you replace or add new plants, not only increases survival rates but helps the plants become established and grow more quickly," said Fernandez.

"In lab activities, as well as a class project to convert a small part of the College of Sequoias' landscaping, students will gain first-hand experience in how to use Xeriscape to spruce up their yards and increase the value of their homes."

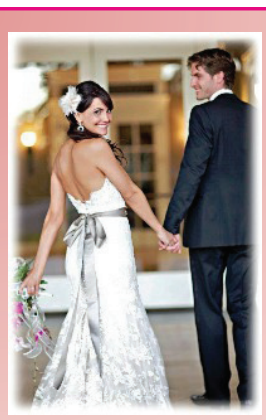
Xeriscape: Water Conservation is just one of many Ornamental Horticulture and Agriculture courses available at College of the Sequoias that can upgrade your skills, prepare you for a career or increase your knowledge. Like this course on water-wise landscaping, what you learn at College of the Sequoias can benefit you in making a difference for your family and our community.

Fernandez has been an Ornamental Horticultural faculty member at the College of the Sequoias since 2004.

His landscaping industry experience includes irrigation design and installation, landscape management, turf grass installation and management, and soil preparation and testing. He also holds a Single Subject teaching credential in Agriculture and a Specialist in Agriculture teaching credential from CSU, Fresno.

Go to the College of the Sequoias website today at www.cos.edu to register for the Xeriscape: Water Conservation (OH-218) in Ornamental Horticulture.

If you have additional questions, contact Fernandez at (559) 688-3112, (559) 688-3116 or fernandof@cos.edu.



Wedding Planning made easy and fun
Save time and money by comparing the finest bridal businesses in the area!
All in One Place… All In One Day
Sunday, August 30, 2015
11:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Visalia Holiday Inn and Conference Center
9000 W. Airport Dr., Visalia
Tickets at the door $12. Register at *www.abridalodyssey.com for $2.00 discount coupon.*

A Bridal Odyssey
Bridal Show and Expo
"Sweet Treasurers" wedding cake dive
High energy fashion show at 2:30 pm
Grand prize. . . 7-day Dream Honeymoon
Prizes awarded throughout the day
/ Fashion Show
/ Exhibits
/ Tastings
/ Prizes

Brides Magazine is giving every registered bride a one-year subscription with your paid admission to the show.
Produced by 'Mancini' Productions
Featured Sponsors:
BSPI Bridal Show Producers
Association for Wedding Professionals International
Holiday Inn
WeddingWire
Premier Bride
Brides
www.BridalShowNearYou.com
Like us on to stay up to date on show information and bridal show dates.

Many of Dave Griswold's bird houses are made without prior design, but rather he follows the wood pattern to lead him to its design. Photo courtesy Dave Griswold.

Birdhouses

Continued from p. 17

ones, and $500-700 for the larger ones, he said.

When not in a gallery, his bird houses are on display in his backyard. He only uses one to feed his local birds. The houses, or feeders, are designed to be outside, he said, and will last 20 or 30 years, or more.

Griswold does not have any particular favorite.

"Usually the one I am making and finishing up is my favorite," he said.

The show runs through Friday, September 18. An artist's reception will be held on Friday, September 4 from 4-7pm. The Porterville Art Association is open Wednesday-Saturday from 10am-4pm. It is located at 151 N. Main St. in Porterville.

Artists

Continued from p. 17

Arts in Oakland. She works as gallery coordinator at the Wiegand Gallery in Belmont, Calif.

She paints in oil and watercolors in many different styles, subjects and techniques. Her series of oil paintings from 2010 were inspired by the old masters' technique of using a monochromatic under-painting, also known as the grisailles method, as well as the tumultuous and scattered figures of images from the Sistine Chapel and Rodin's "Gates of Hell."

In her most recent body of work, she uses a similar palette with her use of watercolor and ink. However the appropriation of the absurd expressions of face cards, medieval tapestries and bestiaries incites a light-hearted feel.

The Brandon-Mitchell Gallery is located at 117 S. Locust Street, Visalia.

It is open the first Friday of each month, 5:30-8pm and Monday-Thursday from 9:30am-3:30pm by ringing the bell.

For more information, call 625-2441 or go to www.cslvisalia.org.

Macbeth: A Tragedy of Guilt

Joseph R. Teller

Imagine that, in order to gain an inheritance or big promotion, you have murdered someone in their sleep. And let's make it worse: imagine your victim is not only an old man, but your guest. Furthermore, let's say he is one of your relatives.

You feel soul-crushing guilt for the crime, and the memory of what you have done plagues you. But even in your guilt, you don't want to get caught, and you are not willing to give up what you have gained—money, power, respect. So you cover it up. It works for a while. But how long can you cover it up? How long can you suffer increasingly debilitating guilt? How long can you endure being haunted by the face of your victim, seeing him in your dreams, and living with what you have done?

Such is the terrifying plot of *Macbeth*, a play in which Shakespeare explores the depths and complexities of guilt, fear, power and ambition. This bloody play begins with three witches scouring a battlefield for body parts for their spells. They await Macbeth, a Scottish thane who has just defeated the rebellious Thane of Cowdor. As Macbeth and his friend Banquo enter, the witches prophesy: "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!" They then melt into the earth, leaving Macbeth wondering how, exactly, he's going to become king. King Duncan, meanwhile, is overjoyed by Macbeth's victory over Cowdor (who is executed), and Macbeth invites Duncan and his sons to stay at his castle to celebrate. Macbeth sends a letter to his wife, alerting her of this strange news from the witches and of their impending duties as host and hostess.

Lady Macbeth is overjoyed—not at the victory, but at the prospect of her husband becoming king. Macbeth arrives ahead of Duncan, and with his wife, plots the murder of the king. Macbeth is divided, but Lady Macbeth spurs her husband on to commit the murder while the king sleeps: "What cannot you and I perform upon / Th'unguarded Duncan?" Macbeth kills the king, lays the blame on the king's sons (who flee Scotland), and then becomes king himself. But Macbeth "will sleep no more" after the murder because, as cover-ups go, his first crime forces him to commit more: he has Banquo killed, hires spies for every Scottish thane's house, and in a climactic act of savagery, has the entire household of another thane slaughtered (including women and children).

He is indeed "in blood / Stepped in so far that, should [he] wade no more, / Returning were as tedious as go o'er." Meanwhile, Lady Macbeth in her guilt spends each night sleepwalking, reliving the murder of Duncan, a hellish torment that leads to her eventual suicide. In the end, Macbeth is overthrown, and the play ends with Macbeth's severed head on a pike—exactly the same traitor's fate he had inflicted on the Thane of Cowdor in Act 1.

Macbeth is not a "hero," but he is one of the most fascinating of Shakespeare's characters precisely because he embodies the potential for ambition, guile, self-division and self-destruction that lies within all of us. Even when we watch him order the deaths of his friends, we feel sympathy for him; and maybe because the play begins with a prophecy, we also are never fully convinced Macbeth isn't doomed by forces outside himself. To what extent, after all, is Macbeth free to act once he has heard the witches' prophecy? Why does he continue on his path of power and destruction even when he recognizes it as evil—and even when he realizes his power was never more than a fleeting fantasy? Would we, if we were in Macbeth's position, stand over Duncan's sleeping body and spare him? Or would we, like Macbeth, plunge the dagger in?

The Gateway
RESTAURANT & LODGE
Open Daily
8 am - 2 am
• Breakfast
• Lunch
• Dinner
• Full Bar
Live Music!
Fridays • 7-10 pm
Sundays • 6-9 pm
Manny Oldenbourg
on Guitar
Highway 198 at the Entrance to the Sequoia National Park
www.gateway-sequoia.com • (559) 561-4133

More than 40 years in Downtown Visalia
MICHAEL'S
Custom Jewelry
559-734-7079
316 W. Main St., Visalia, CA 93291
www.michaelscustomjewelry.com

Certified Gemologist Appraiser
COMPLIMENTARY CLEANING AND INSPECTION OF YOUR JEWELRY
3-D DESIGNS
CERTIFIED APPRAISALS
RING SIZING
RESTRINGING
WATCH REPAIR
WATCH BATTERIES
WATCH BANDS
STONE REPLACEMENT
PRONG RETIPPING
FREE GIFT WRAPPING WITH PURCHASE

Calendar

VENDOR ALERT SPACE AVAILABLE
The 30th annual Holiday Bazaar sponsored by the Three Rivers Senior League will be Saturday, November 14th, 9:00am to 4:00pm. The event is held at the Three Rivers Memorial Building. Vendor spaces are $25.00 for outside and $30.00 for the inside. For further information please call Mo Basham 561-4988 or email wildirish57att.net

Mondays: Bridge Club, 9:30am-2pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291 Admission is free. For additional information call: Joan Dinwiddie @ 732-0855

Mondays: Knitters, 10am-12:30pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Everyone's welcome.

Fridays: Women's Morning Bible Study, 9am-Noon
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. For additional information call: 739-9010

Saturdays starting August 22: Dog Obedience Course, 9-10am
6-week Basic Manner course, Exeter City Park. $120/6-week-course. For more information, call (559) 568-8863 or email fortheloveofdg@doglover.com.

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

June 8 through August: Oil Paintings by Betty Berk
This is a one-woman exhibit at Cafe 225. There will be a reception at 1pm on Sunday, June 14.

Through October 28: Free Fly Casting Instruction, 6-7pm
Kaweah Fly Fishers are offering fly casting lessons at Del Lago Park in Tulare every Wednesday evening until October 28. Rods and reels will be supplied or you may bring your own.

AUGUST

August 20: Assemblyman Devon Mathis Keynotes Central Valley Tea Party, 6pm
Come to 135 W. Tulare Ave. to hear what your representative is doing for you during California's historic drought. His bills to be discussed: Water Bill AB95- Immediate assistance for at-risk families, AB144- Illegal Dumping, AB166 - Real Estate Recording process, AB954- Accessible Water Preservation Program, AJR7 - Request Congress allow Veterans to use GI funds for a business instead of schooling, AB1542 - Continue appropriations for Veteran's Neuropsychologists on an annual basis. Contact: 967-4952

August 21 and 22, 2pm and 5pm; August 23, 11am: "Ersa of the Red Trees: A Unique Rendition of the Classic Sequoia Tale"
The Sequoia Field Institute invites you back to 1926--at the General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park--to watch the Pageant Master of the National Parks, Garnet Holme, present his latest campaign to win hearts and souls of the public to the cause of environmentalism. This mysterious and magical pageant shall be presented by the Mountain, Forest, and Desert players, and it will be performed under the towering shadows of the world's oldest, largest and most magnificent trees. It is a romantic and epic tale of love, heroism, loyalty, treachery, goodness and evil. The pageant will display fairies and beasts, magic and poetry, feats of derring do, and YOU. General Sherman will be seeking recruits for his battle to defend the Earth. Will you be chosen? Odds are good. Come be inspired and have fun."

August 21: 6th Annual Golf Skills Challenge, 7:30am
At Valley Oaks Golf Course. 7:30am Registration, 9:00am Tee-off. TOURNAMENT STYLE: There will be a 9-hole regular course AND a 9-hole skills challenge course. Prizes will be awarded to challenge winners throughout the day.

August 21: "Cop, Kids and Ice Cream Event," 1-2:30pm
Corcoran Police Activity League (PAL) is going to once again have a "Cop, Kids and Ice Cream Event" This will be held at Bret Harte. For further details contact Kathy Gibson at 992-5151.

August 21: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Mighty Oaks Chorus

August 22: Dine to donate breakfast fundraiser, 8-11am
At Visalia Hometown Buffet, a fundraiser for Valley Oak SPCA. Tickets are $10 per person. Enjoy unlimited entree and beverage. Purchase your tickets by Wednesday, August 19 at Valley Oak SPCA Adoption Center, 29010 Hwy 99, Visalia or Valley Oak SPCA Low Cost Spay and Neuter Clinic, 9405 W. Goshen Ave, Visalia. Call 651-1111 to charge by phone.

August 22: Exeter Volunteer Fire Department Fundraiser Poker Run, 8am
Registration is at 8 am and the event begins at 10 am at the Exeter Memorial Building, 324 N. Kaweah. For more informatioin, contact Larry Mayfield at (559) 786-1775.

August 24: College of the Sequoias Great Books Discussion Group, 4-5:30pm
The group meets second and fourth Mondays monthly in the COS campus' Hospital Rock 133 room in front of the Book Store, just SE of Kern. Tonight's topic: Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of the People

August 24-30: Blood Drive/5K Run
Porterville Kiwanis Club, Porterville Runners and Central California Blood Bank have joined forces and will be spearheading the inaugural "Give A Drop of Hope" a blood drive/5k run. Event will be in honor of David Gong local resident, an 11 time cancer survivor. David states blood transfusions have saved his life during his battles with cancer. He is currently on list for kidney transplant. Gong has been instrumental in getting food programs set up, swimming programs for low income students started in the Porterville community. August 24-29, will be the blood drive portion . Donors can go to the Porterville and Visalia Blood Bank Offices. August 30th will be day of 5k run. there will also be a mini fair during/after run.Blood bank bus will be at event for spectators. Runner admission is 5 cases of water or one pint of blood. For more information, contact Diana Oceguera Martinez 559-333-1036 or David Gong 756-0429.

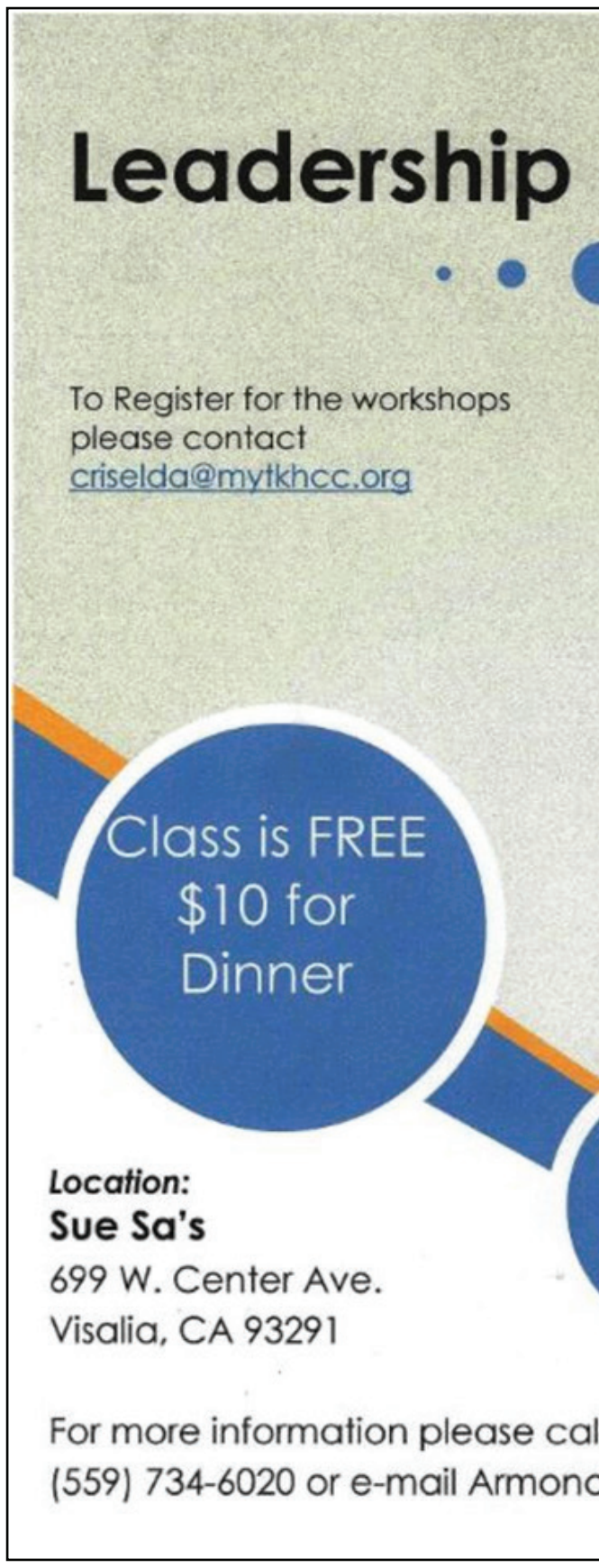
August 25: "Explorer Appreciation and Open Recruitment Night"
Corcoran Police Explorers will be hosting a "Explorer Appreciation and Open Recruitment Night". This event will be held at the Corcoran City Council Chambers on August 25. For further details contact Sgt. Pedro Castro or Kathy Gibson at 992-5151

August 27: LaVone Sterling & Ellen Milinich show opens, Reception 5-7pm
At the Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. HOURS: Thursday, 10am to 4pm; Friday: 10am to 4pm; Saturday: 10am to 4pm. For more information call (559) 686-2074.

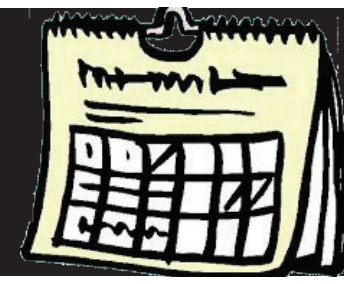
August 27: Eli Nicholas Comedy Blast; Doors 7pm, Show 8pm
Featuring Sean Williams and Jason Cheny, the show takes place at the Lunch Box, 112 North Court Street in Visalia. Tickets are $10.

August 29: Shop for a Cause
Special shopping passes are $5 each, and every dollar stays with Habitat for Humanity of Tulare County. Passes are filled with exclusive Macy's discounts and a chance to win a $500 gift card. Call Habitat at 734-4040 to get your passes.

August 29: Morrissey at the Visalia Fox--Doors 7pm, Show, 8:30
Morrissey has been called 'one of the most singular figures in Western popular culture from the last twenty years' for his contribution to music (Pitchfork). His music has influenced such seminal artists as Radiohead, The Killers, Oasis and The Decemberists. Morrissey is the iconic front man of The Smiths, one of the most influential bands in history. The Smiths emerged from the British independent music scene in the 1980s and Morrissey led the band to 15 studio, live and compilations albums in their short five years together. After The Smiths disbanded, Morrissey launched a prolific solo career that included 49 singles and twelve solo top-ten albums, three of them landing at #1 on the UK charts. His latest album, World Peace Is None Of Your Business, was released in July 2014. Throughout his career leading The Smiths and as a solo artist, he has sold millions of records. The Independent summed up his level of influence, writing that 'most pop stars have to be dead before they reach the iconic status he has reached in his lifetime.'

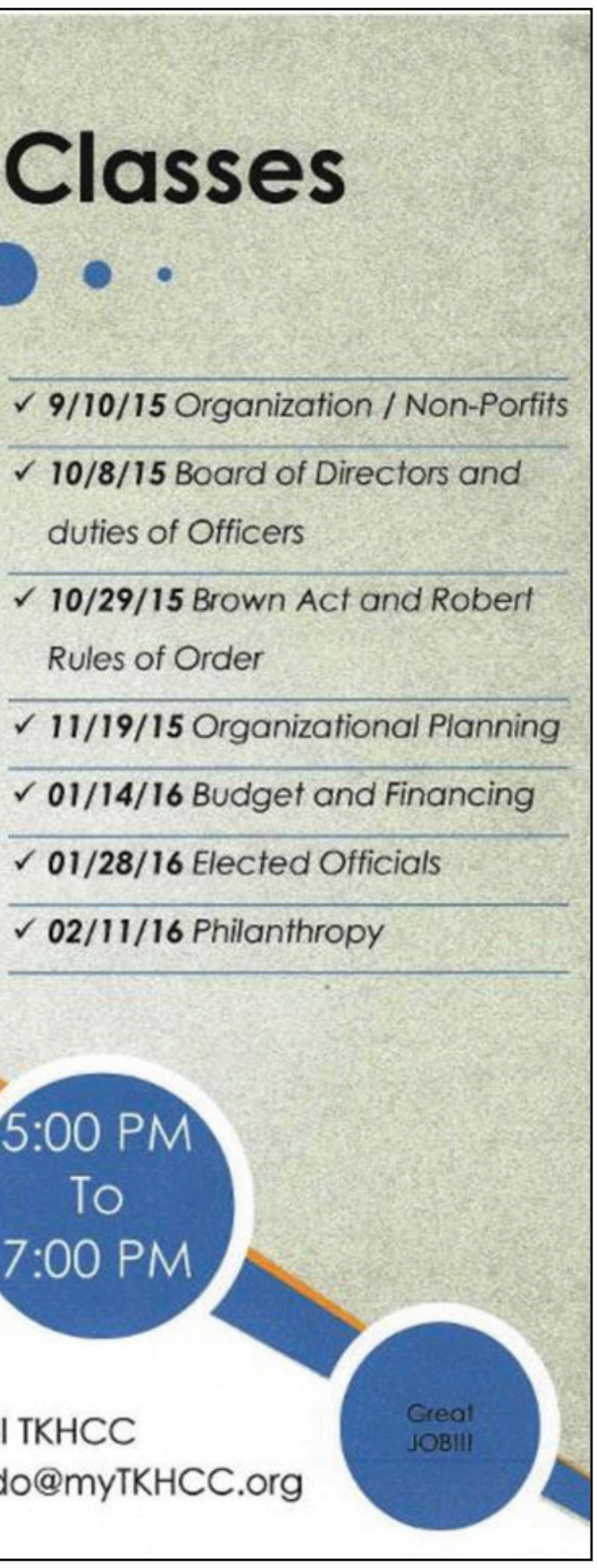


August 30: Silent Peace Walk, 8am
Sunday, August 30, 2015 will be Silent Peace Walk Day. Events will be taking place nationally and globally for this event. The community is invited to



join, beginning at 8am Aug. 30 at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 308 W. Main St., walking to Ben Maddox Way and back to the Fox. Participants will introduce themselves, hug, then begin the SILENT walk. Great opportunity to get in touch with our environment, and bring people together to express their desire for peace.

August 30: Downtown Hanford 5k Walk/Run, 8am
Start and finish in front of the Hanford Fox theater, 326 N. Irwin Street. Proceeds to benefit Kings Rehabilitation Center.



Aug. 30-Oct. 11 -'War Comes Home: The Legacy'
An exhibit, sponsored through partnership of Cal Humanities, California State Library and Exhibit Envoy. At the Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare. HOURS: Thursday, 10am to 4pm; Friday: 10am to 4pm; Saturday: 10am to 4pm. For more information call (559) 686-2074.

August 31: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

SEPTEMBER

September 3: 20th Anniversary Making a Difference for Life Fundraising Banquet, 7pm
Tulare-Kings Right to Life will host their 20th Anniversary Making a Difference for Life Fundraising Banquet. In addition to being TKRL's most popular event of the year and one of the largest non-profit banquets in the area, this evening will also celebrate the culmination of 25 years of leadership from Executive Director, April Kesterson, and introduce attendees to the incoming Executive Director. In keeping with the 20th Anniversary celebratory theme, prices have been reduced this year: Sponsorships for a Table of 8 are $495; individual tickets may be purchased for $65 each. For more information or to reserve your table, please call 732-5000, email april@tkrl.org, or visit www.tkrl.org.

September 3: "Color, Texture, and Design" Exhibit at Fresno City Hall, 5-8pm
Featuring Main Gallery ArtistsToni Best, Jeri Burzin, Laurie Gorman, Beckie Nava,and Deborah Nolan. Art Hop Thursday, September 3, 5:00 - 8:00 pm Exhibition Dates: Sept. 1 – Sept. 25.

September 4: Business Seminar Series De-escalation, 3:30-5pm
At the train depot/Lemoore Chamber. Tickets $15 for members, $20 for non-members. For more information call (559) 924-6401.

September 4: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9:30
Jerry Hall

September 9: Social Media: How To Create a Successful Campaign, 9-10am
Visalia Chamber of Commerce Business Academy Presents: Let's Talk Social: Presented by True Legacy Consulting, at Brandman University 649 South County Center, Visalia. With all the changes happening to different Social Media platforms it is difficult to figure out what is actually working! We will go over what changes have been made and ways to be successful despite them! Chamber Members - Free; Non-Chamber Members $30.00. For more information contact Nicola Wissler at 559-734-5876.

September 9: Visalia Senior Center 50+ ROCKS Open House, 4-7pm
This event is designed to bring together businesses, program opportunities and service providers to our 50 and better population. Hosted by Central Valley Tax Services.

September 11: Pops in the Park, 8-9:15pm
This is your chance to join friends and family for an informal picnic dinner under the stars and hear the great music of the Orchestra. Presented by and benefitting VRM. Tickets available vrmhope.org/events

September 12: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

September 12: Small Town Cruizers 11th Annual Summer Send Off, 9am-3pm
Come together / Park together! registration 7-9am • Awards 2:45 pm • Raffles each hour merchant awards & ten Special trophies • Club Participation trophy Cash Drawings • Vendor alley • Oldies music by DJ John Avila. Next to Will Tiesiera Ford 2101 E. Cross St, Tulare. Open to all years of: Hot Rods, Customs, Classics, Antique Cars, Muscle Cars, Street Rods, Stockers, Motorcycles, PT Cruisers, Roadsters, Corvettes, Low Riders, Trucks, and Pick Ups. All net proceeds to benefit: Central Valley WWII Veterans honor Flight Tulare Chapter and Tulare Baseball association. For more information visit www.smalltowncruizers.com or contact Bob at 559-623-1790.

September 12: Children's Storybook Garden & Museum Annual Fall Fundraising Event, 5pm
A jazz night themed party with the Amazing Lemoore High School Choir performing "And All That Jazz". Roaring 20's fashion is encouraged. Come join us for this really fun opportunity to support the Children's Storybook Garden & Museum. Tickets are only $65.00 and a table of 8 is $500. Appetizers, dinner, dessert, live auction, silent auction, dancing and watching!

September 14: College of the Sequoias Great Books Discussion Group, 4-5:30pm
The group meets second and fourth Mondays monthly in the COS campus' Hospital Rock 133 room in front of the Book Store, just SE of Kern. Tonight's topic: Henri Poincaré, "The Value of Science"

September 17-22: American Association of University Women Book Sale, Regular Mall Hours
The annual AAUW book sale at Sequoia Mall will be in September instead of October. There will NOT be a preview night on the evening before the sale. Prices will vary this sale and there will be some special offers on books. 100% of the profit made goes to scholarships for local students

September 17: Effective Negotiations Workshop, 3-6pm
This workshop will include: Understanding contracts - fixed time and material, Common negotiated Areas, What is the Business Objective-long term versus short term profits. To register for this Workshop contact the Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce at (559) 734-6020 or to armondo@mytkhcc.org

September 19: Handmade and Homegrown Craft Fair, 10am-4pm
Handmade and Homegrown Craft Fair brought to you by The Looking Glass, on the corner of Caldwell and Garden in the Whites Music Shopping Center. We have more than 35 vendors featuring their handmade goods. Jewelry, Children's Boutique Clothing and Accessories, Wood and Wire Crafts Birdhouses, Handmade Soaps, Fine Art and Photography, Local Honey and Jams, Up-cycled and Repurposed Décor, furniture and so much more! The Visalia Rescue Mission will be there with a truck to take any donation, large or small! Visit us on the web at thelookingglassvisalia.com or contact the store at 242 E Caldwell 559.732.2787

September 26: Mavericks Pony Express 5K Run, 7:30am
Mavericks Coffee House & Roasting Company proudly presents its annual 5K Run with all proceeds benefitting Happy Trails Riding Academy. It will be held Saturday, September 26, 2015 at Happy Trails, 2773 E. Oakdale Avenue (Ave 256) in Tulare. Start times for three events are – Kids Race (10 yrs of age and younger) at 7:30 a.m.; Walkers at 7:45 a.m.; and Runners at 8:00 a.m. Registration fee is $30 for advance registration or $35 on race day. Kids 'Fun Run" registration is $10.

Submit written calendar items ourvalleyvoice.com

Sports

Tulare High School Junior Taking His Boxing Talents to Russia

Stefan Barros

Mission Oak junior Richard Torrez has quite the busy schedule. Aside from boxing, he is also a football player, and of course he has his classwork. Torrez has had so much success in the boxing ring, he is going across the globe - to Russia to compete.

Torrez will be competing in the Junior World Championships in Russia starting Saturday, August 29.

"I see this as an amazing opportunity," he said. "This is something I've always wanted to do, go to different places and box against people from all over the world."

Torrez is a member of the USA Boxing team and his trip to Russia will be paid for by USA Boxing.

He began boxing when he was very young, as his father was also a boxer.

"I've always been boxing, ever since I could remember," he said. "Just hearing my dad tell stories of when he boxed in the Dominican Republic - I just wanted to be where he was and I kept working at it. One day it hit me, and it just starting clicking."

All of the work that Torrez has put in came to the forefront, when in June, he was named the best boxer at the Junior Olympic Tournament in West Virginia, which qualified him for the Junior World Championships. Torrez also won another national tournament in Reno.

"I've always had a passion for sports," he said. "I've always wanted to put my full heart and my 100 percent in everything I competed in. Even in pick-up basketball games."

Torrez's father, Richard Torrez, Sr., said he is proud to see what his son has become has boxer.

"When you put the time and effort into something it's satisfying," he said. "He's a better boxer than I was and he has the talent. It's very exciting."

Richard Torrez in the ring. Photo: Stefan Barros/Valley Voice

With that busy schedule that Torrez has right now, between boxing, football and school, one might think that could overwhelm a person, but Torrez does not let that affect him, and credits his school for being supportive of his other interests.

Richard Torrez. Photo: Stefan Barros/Valley Voice

"I've become accustomed to the schedule," he said. "The staff at Mission Oak has been wonderful and they have been lenient to my schedule I have boxing. They have always been there with support and Coach [Mark] Gambini has been great too. I love doing football and boxing. It really helps me stay in shape."

Torrez does feel that while playing football and boxing, you do need to have a similar mentality, and that is why, he said, he loves doing both.

"In all sports you need to have a certain mindset," he said. "I try to take the same mindset I have on the football field and put into the boxing ring. When you're tired in the fourth quarter of a game or you're at the end of a long fight, you need to have a strong mentality to get through it. When you're on the football field you want to be somebody you're teammates can look to."

Though boxing was an early passion, Torrez also sees football as being very important in his life and just enjoys the competition.

"Football is a very important sport to me," he said. "I just love the Friday night lights and being on the field with my second family."

Torrez, who plays middle linebacker, fullback and long snapper for the Mission Oak's Hawks and has also considered the possibility of playing football after high school.

"It would be great to not have to pay for college," he said. "Football is great way to accomplish that. Football is such a great game, so I've thought about it."

For Torrez, sports are his life, especially boxing, and he does not want to live a life without it.

"I couldn't picture life without boxing," he said. "I've always boxed. I always will box for as long as I can. I've work at it so hard, I just want to keep on going with it."

Former NFL Player Joins WHCC Coaching Staff

The West Hills College Coalinga Falcons will soon add a new member to their coaching staff for the upcoming season.

Dwayne Wright, who played in the NFL from 2007 to 2010 and is himself a West Hills College Coalinga alumnus, will join the team as the running backs coach, and strength and conditioning coordinator.

Dwayne Wright.

"What I hope to bring to the team is not only tough, hard-nosed and solid efforts when it comes to the coaching aspect, but mentorship when it comes to everyday life and helping these gentlemen reach their goals by first earning their degrees and continuing on at a four year institution," Wright said. "I want them to succeed academically and athletically."

Wright began his college football career at WHCC in 2002, where he was named Most Valuable Offensive Player.

He went on to play with the Fresno State Bulldogs after graduating and there became only the 12th player in the program's history to gain more than 1,000 rushing yards.

He was drafted by the Buffalo Bills in 2007 and also played for the New York Giants, Philadelphia Eagles and Pittsburgh Steelers during his NFL career.

He played for the Toronto Argonauts from 2010 to 2011 and for the Hartford Colonials in 2011 in the Canadian Football League and United Football League, respectively.

Head Coach Cam Olson said the decision to hire Wright for the position was an easy one.

"It was a no-brainer for me to hire Coach Wright," he said. "It's an opportunity for these kids to be around a high-character and hard-working guy, a guy who is a West Hills Falcon Alum with significant professional playing experience. Coach Wright will bring a great deal of energy and experience to the RB position along with passion in the strength and conditioning realm."

Wright has previously served as a running backs and special teams coach at several San Diego area high schools, including Morse High School, Lincoln High School and University City High.

He applied for the coaching position after guest speaking at a recent Falcons event, a ring ceremony for the 2014 team.

"Right then I saw the drive in the eyes of the players and coaches and that's when I felt in my heart, 'This is where I started,'" he said. "Just three days after that I saw the assistant coach position available and I immediately contacted Coach Mark Gritton about it."

Wright officially started in the new position on August 1.

Health

FHCN Welcomes Newest Family Medicine Provider in Goshen

Sabrina Hamilton, FNP-S

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) is pleased to announce Sabrina Hamilton, FNP-S as the newest addition to its provider team in Goshen, CA. Practicing as a Family Nurse Practitioner, Hamilton is now offering comprehensive family medicine services for patients at FHCN's Goshen Health Center.

Hamilton received her Master of Science in Nursing from the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at Samuel Merritt University, where she also completed a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Hamilton is accepting new patients at FHCN's Health Center in Goshen, located at 31180 Road 72. To schedule an appointment with Family HealthCare Network, please call 1-877-960-3426 (FHCN) or visit www.FHCN.org for more information. The health center is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM, and Saturdays, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

About Family HealthCare Network:

Family HealthCare Network is a private nonprofit organization that operates federally qualified health centers.

Our mission is to provide quality health care to everyone in the communities we serve.

We operate 18 sites, of which 14 are community health centers located in Tulare and Kings Counties. Family HealthCare Network is recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home and is dually recognized by The Joint Commission with its Gold Seal of Approval® for Patient Quality and Safety and as a Patient Centered Primary Medical Home.

County Installs Additional Nonpotable Water Tanks

Tulare County continues to expand its drought relief efforts by installing four additional non-potable water tanks in locations around the county for residents in need.

The new tanks join three previously installed non-potable water tanks, two in the community of East Porterville and one just south of the city of Visalia. All seven tanks are in operation and available to county residents.

Each non-potable water tank is equipped with a variety of hoses and fittings, including electric pumps, designed to quickly fill water storage containers of all sizes. The tanks are meant to provide temporary relief for drought affected households.

"We've seen lots of folks trying to get water wherever they can, but they are increasingly faced with challenges when doing so," said Tulare County Office of Emergency Services Manager Andrew Lockman. "We're trying to fill that gap with the installation of these water tanks in order to give people somewhere to go to get the water they need for sanitation purposes."

Non-potable water may be used for washing clothes, flushing toilets and bathing, but is not suitable for consumption.

Residents should not use non-potable water for drinking, cooking, teeth-brushing or dish-washing. In addition, the water is not to be used to water lawns as the water provided to fill most tanks must be purchased and hauled in from various locations.

The non-potable water should only

WATER continued on **24 »**

Kaweah Delta Earns U.S. News & World Report Ranking

Leheb H. Araim, MD, FACS and Sergio Caminha, MD, Medical Director of Cardiac Surgery at Kaweah Delta

Dr. Caminha

Dr. Araim

We are excited to share with you our excellent results for cardiac surgery patients at Kaweah Delta Medical Center. We are also pleased to inform you that U.S. News and World Report recently ranked Kaweah Delta as the only "high performing" hospital in coronary artery bypass graft surgery (CABG) from Bakersfield to Fresno. This prestigious ranking was given only to the top 14 percent of hospitals in the nation. We want our community to be informed about our outstanding results and continued commitment in providing superb care for heart patients, right here at home.

Cardiac surgery is considered a higher-risk procedure. Overall, our data for the past year shows that over 98% of patients who underwent heart surgery at Kaweah Delta were alive and doing well one month later. That is significantly better than other similar hospitals and the national average according to the Society of Thoracic Surgeons' (STS) national benchmarking database.

Likewise, patients who have undergone CABG to improve blood flow to their heart have done extremely well. In 2014, patients who underwent the procedure at Kaweah Delta had a better survival rate compared to like hospitals and the STS national benchmarking database.

We have also significantly decreased our rate for post-operative kidney failure for cardiac surgery patients. Our continued improvement over the last three years has us performing better than like hospitals and the national STS database.

Of all the complications that can occur after heart surgery (or any surgery, for that matter), stroke continues to be the most feared. In 2014, not a single patient suffered a stroke after a CABG procedure at Kaweah Delta. That is perhaps our most impressive accomplishment. It's a testament of our safe and proven techniques coupled with meticulous care before, during and after cardiac surgery.

We take great pride in providing cardiac surgery to our community at Kaweah Delta. We would not be able to achieve these results without the collective hard work from physicians and the partnership with Kaweah Delta Medical Center, its nurses and its cardiac surgery team.

Water

Continued from p. 23

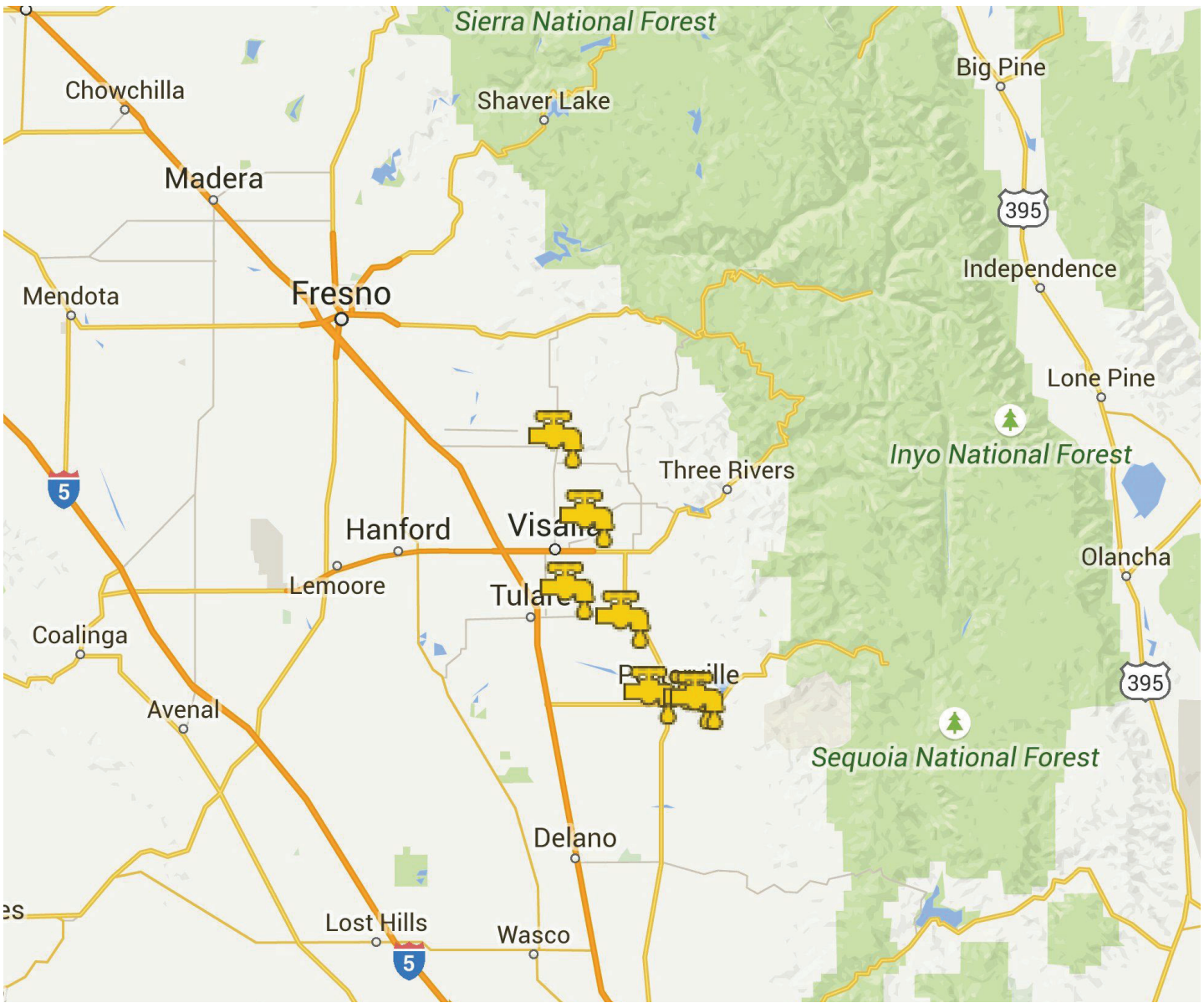
be used by residents experiencing an emergency water situation.

The Tulare County Office of Emergency Services (OES) has been overseeing the tank installation project, but management of the tanks has been a collaboration between various county departments, including the use of local vendors.

"Our hope is that the expansion of the non-potable water tank program will offer some relief to the residents who have been hit the hardest by the drought," said Chairman of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors Steve Worthley. "I commend each of our county departments who continue to work diligently in their search and provision of resources to residents in their drought-induced time of need."

To view a map of all the county's non-potable water tank locations, please visit the "Drought" web page by going to the following link: http://tularecounty.ca.gov/emergencies/index.cfm/drought/non-potable-water-tanks/

For more information about the non-potable water tanks or to seek assistance for drought related issues, please contact OES at (559) 636-7495.



Non-potable water tank locations:

Tulare County Fire Station #2
22315 Avenue 152
Porterville, 93257

Tulare County Fire Station #4
40779 Road 128
Cutler, 93615

Tulare County Fire Station #8
32868 Hawthorne Road
Ivanhoe, 93235

Tulare County Fire Station #15
19603 Avenue 228
Lindsay, 93247

Tulare County Fire Station #20
1551 E. Success Drive
Porterville, CA 93257

Sunnyside Body Shop
2216 E. Springville Avenue
Porterville, CA 93257

Tulare County Road Yard
14001 Avenue 256
Visalia, CA 93292